

# ARTWORK

A QUARTERLY EDITED BY PROFESSOR RANDOLPH SCHWABE

Published by J. M. DENT & SONS LTD.

NO.27      AUTUMN      1931

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*A Quarterly edited by Professor Randolph Schwabe*

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*Published by J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 11 Bedford Street, W.C.2*

THE new editorship of this Quarterly began with the Autumn number of 1930. Copies of some back numbers can still be obtained, 2/9 each, post free.

¶ A special feature has been a series of BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES of LIVING ARTISTS, illustrated by portraits and reproductions of their work.

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¶ Among writers of articles on PAINTERS, SCULPTORS, ARCHITECTS and CRAFTSMEN, and of REVIEWS have been

Charles Aitken, C. R. Ashbee, Walter Bayes, R. P. Bedford, D. P. Bliss, Sir Reginald Blomfield, Thomas Bodkin, Sir D. Y. Cameron, Stanley Casson, Kenneth Clark, Randall Davies, Leonard Elton, Katherine Esdaile, A. M. Hind, F. M. Kelly, William King, W. R. Lethaby, D. S. MacColl, Eric Maclagan, A. E. Popham, A. R. Powys, A. G. B. Russell, Albert Rutherston, Randolph Schwabe, Hugh Stokes, R. A. Walker, J. S. Wilson.

¶ Besides ILLUSTRATIONS accompanying articles, numerous REPRODUCTIONS OF WORKS OF ART, English and Foreign, have been published, with or without biographical and elucidating NOTES.

¶ A regular feature has been the Editorial Notes, continued and expanded as A QUARTERLY CHRONICLE.





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In most cases preliminary letters are unnecessary, the periodical itself providing sufficient information as to its scope and the suitability of the proposed contribution.

Every possible care is taken with MSS. and photographs, but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for loss or damage. All contributions must be addressed as follows: The Editor, ARTWORK, 11 Bedford Street, London, W.C.2.

*In Venice with Turner.* By A. J. Finberg. Illustrated with 45 reproductions in colour and collotype of oil paintings, water-colours and pencil sketches of Venice by J. M. W. Turner, R.A. 11 × 9 ins., pp. 184. London: The Cotswold Gallery. £4 4s. net.

Turner's drawings are a revelation to us to-day, as they were to his contemporaries, of our own experiences and memories of Venice. Like Venice itself, they enchant or disturb. And to every lover of Turner's drawings, and of the Venice that can still remain a fairyland and not a mere background to the Lido, Mr. Finberg's book is of absorbing interest.

Some two or three years ago I met Mr. Finberg in Venice, exploring side canals, pacing every flag-stone of the Piazza and Piazzetta, and climbing Palace stairs, not with Baedeker and his own sketch-book, but with a camera and a bundle of photographs of Turner's sketches, under his arm. The result of all his gambolling and gondolling is in this memorable book. Ruskin, on his visit of 1845, had searched Venice for 'authority for all that Turner has done of her.' Mr. Finberg with his later knowledge of Turner's work, and particularly of all the Turner sketch-books, has carried us far further than Ruskin in knowledge of material facts and history. Mr. Finberg's principal discovery, apart from all his identifications and descriptive criticism, is the fact, unknown to Turner's biographers, that though he exhibited no oil paintings of Venice till 1833, he visited Venice in 1819, and based his 1833 work on the memories of thirteen years before. On the visit of 1819 the magician of colour made about 130 sketches in pencil and used colour in only four drawings. He was steeping himself in Venice and its atmosphere, living in the place and searching its very heart, before he trusted himself to paint the spirit more than the reality. Mr. Finberg shows how these early drawings were used again and again in later work, and by means of numerous illustrations indicates the absolute accuracy of Turner's pencil work and also how, later, he was ready to twist and distort the larger aspects of architecture, and details as well, in dramatizing his scene with an imagination always fed by facts. It is amazing to contrast the mechanical convention that represents a gondola in some of his later

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*Book Reviews* (continued from page iv)

painting with the true and beautiful shapes that are accurately realized in these early days. And, with regard to Turner's methods, it is interesting to have proof that he rarely used colour in the open air. Mr. Finberg on this point gives a valuable quotation from a letter of John Soane, Junr., in 1819: 'At Rome a sucking blade of the brush made the request of going out with Pig Turner to colour—he grunted for answer that it would take up too much time to colour in the open air—he could make fifteen or sixteen pencil sketches to one coloured, and then grunted his way home.' It is worth noting, as Mr. Finberg shows, that the whole fabric of Turner's Venetian work was based on three visits, covering only seven or eight weeks in all, and spreading over a period of twenty years.

Even though we recognize Turner's greatness, his sincerity, his position as an innovator, we are apt to accept him, even as his contemporaries did in 1819, as a sort of institution. It is time again, as Mr. Finberg has done in this valuable book, to reveal new truths, to restore the balance, and particularly to point

out the unity of thought and feeling that runs through all Turner's work, from his closely defined early studies to the gay rapture of his Venice water-colours and the golden vision of his later days. All of this is indicated in a book which is admirable for its own sake on account of its fine printing and the real excellence of its reproductions.

MARTIN HARDIE

*Everyman.* Woodcuts by Thomas Derrick.  
11 $\frac{3}{4}$  × 9 ins., pp. 100; 70 illus. London:  
J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd. 15s. net.

Mr. Derrick's coloured illustrations to Boccaccio some years back announced an artist with an independent view of the illustrator's task. The drawings (cut on wood) were not like other people's, they took their place happily in the book, on the paper used for printing the text, and they did not shirk the story-telling business. His 'Everyman' goes further, perhaps, in individual treatment. A touch of mediævalism is common to both books, and is not unsuited to their subject matter; but the heavy black lines of the later woodcuts, demanding heavy type to go with them, are very different from the delicacy of his 'Decameron.' He is at present amusing the readers of 'The London Mercury' by a series of 'Parables,' the drawings for which are done with a few clear lines of well-controlled brushwork. It is evident that variety is one of his merits, and humour is another.

*The Ancient Plate of the Drapers' Company.*  
By M. A. Greenwood. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  × 8 ins.;  
pp. 128, 31 illustrations. Oxford Uni-  
versity Press, 1930. 21s.

Although not so rich in outstanding examples of ancient plate as some of the other Livery Companies, such as the Mercers' or Goldsmiths', the Drapers' Company boasts a large number of pieces of considerable artistic and historic interest.

Among them the earliest and by far the most important is a 'Cupp of silver and gilt with a Cover having the Armes of England the Armes of the Mr. of the Rowles and the Armes of this Company ingraved thereon.' The Master of the Rolls in question is the famous antiquary William Lambard, who on August 4th, 1578, presented the cup to the Drapers 'to Remyne to this Company for



Ever.' This fine example of English silver-smiths' work formed part of a selection of some dozen pieces from the same Company's plate chest shown at the City Companies' Exhibition, which was held at the Victoria and Albert Museum four years ago. It is of considerable interest as the only piece belonging to the Drapers to survive the Civil War period, at which time the Corporations, City Companies and Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were all compelled to sell the greater part of their plate to satisfy the heavy demands of Charles I.

After the Restoration the Liveries started to replenish their stores of table silver, and the Drapers acquired a number of fine examples, which are still in their possession. The company is also rich in loving cups and similar objects of the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Mr. Greenwood is to be congratulated on having furnished a most thorough and intelligent description of this ancient plate 'with some account of its origin, history and vicissitudes.' It must, however, be understood that the work is considerably more than a catalogue, and contains not only all the more important references to silver in the Company's records, but also any information the author has been able to glean about the donors of the various pieces and the circumstances in which they were given.

It is prefaced by an introductory chapter, including short notes on the history of mazers, salts, basins and ewers, candlesticks, spoons and forks. With regard to two of these notes, we find ourselves rather at variance with the author. Whilst accepting the early 12th century Gloucester candlestick, which is of gilt bronze, as possibly the earliest example of such an object still existing in this country, we cannot agree that 'after that there is nothing until the time of Charles II.' He also tells us that four-pronged forks were first made in 1726, a statement which is contradicted by the London hall-mark for 1681 to be found on one in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Apart from such minor points the book is deserving of the greatest praise. It is splendidly illustrated, with a useful innovation in the form of a photographic reproduction of the hall-marks accompanying each of the more important pieces depicted. Owing,

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however, to their large number the illustrations rather tend to become separated from their descriptions in the text; for this reason plate-numbers and page-references would have been useful additions.

The work is classified under types of objects, one chapter being entirely devoted to cups, which are in turn arranged in order of date; it is also supplemented by a good and useful index.

C.T.P.B.

*Georgian England.* By A. E. Richardson, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A. 9½ × 6½ ins.; pp. 210, 254 illus. and frontispiece in colour. Messrs. B. T. Batsford Ltd. 21s. net.

Professor Richardson has added to his studies on architecture and 'The English Inn' an ably compressed book on the arts, crafts, trades, amusements, literature, drama and social conditions of the Georgian period. He appears omniscient in everything concerning that age, and gives us not only book-knowledge, but in numberless instances the fruits of intimate acquaintance with actual things described. His excellent opening chapter is a succinct

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vii



A NEW WORK BY JEROME BOSCH



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AMALTHEA-VERLAG - WIEN IV, Argentinierstr. 28

## *Book Reviews (continued from page vii)*

essay on the manifold formative agencies of the time, and after this broad view he is willing to get down literally to brass tacks, and, besides dealing with all the important aspects of his theme, touches interestingly on iron-mongery, methods of lighting, bookbinding, needlework, musical instruments, and all sorts of minor points. There are neat phrases of his own—'an age of brick with squared windows and a lacing of white paint' describing the Georgian city; and apt quotations from contemporaries help to give the 18th century atmosphere—

'To please the noble dame, the courtly Squire

Produced a Tea Pot made in Staffordshire.'

Some readers may think the author a little over-enthusiastic about Flaxman, but most will follow his partiality for Rowlandson: particularly good examples of work by the latter artist have place among a mass of well-chosen, well-reproduced illustrations.

The difficulty with this sort of book is that a thirst for fuller information is raised. Professor Richardson could tell us if he would

where the troops of servants slept, and how the ordinary small town-house was staffed. He could say much about 'Gothic' fashions in architecture and decoration, to which his references are slight. In short, we want a volume five times the size of this one. Within the given limits he could hardly have done more, or selected better.

R.S.

*Savage Messiah.* By H. S. Ede. 9×6 ins., pp. xi+272, with 11 plates and 7 illustrations in the text. William Heinemann, Ltd. 10s. 6d. net.

The library of Sainte Geneviève in Paris must have been the scene of many a strange encounter but of none more strange than the meeting of Henri Gaudier with Sophie Suzanne Brzeska. It is, indeed, difficult, even in the most unhappy lives of artists, to find the equal of the bizarre existence of this strangely assorted and wildly unsuited pair. Henri Gaudier was eighteen and Miss Brzeska was on the threshold of forty; their personalities and experiences were widely different, and their only common points seemed to be that both were poor and both were ill; Henri



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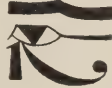
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### Book Reviews (continued from page viii)

with the physical weakness that comes from extreme poverty, and Sophie with the mental disease brought by inhibited fears and forebodings of insanity. Yet these two people were destined to remain together in the most intimate and grotesque circumstances for the next five years until the outbreak of the War. Their life, which forms the subject of this book, was one of unparalleled violence, squalor and repressed passion; happiness, except in the

smallest snatches, seemed scarcely ever to come their way, and almost every form of suffering, both physical and mental, was theirs. The depths of squalor—sometimes admittedly self-imposed—to which these two people sank are almost beyond the imagination, but the tale of their existence is not entirely depressing since, in the case of Henri Gaudier, the gloom is lightened by the flame of a compelling genius and the sparks of a fine intellect. Savagery was, indeed, part of Gaudier's equipment, but in

(continued on page x)



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LONDON: J. M. DENT & SONS

his finest works, such as the *Dancer* and the *Mother and Child*, there is something undeniably Messianic.

Mr. Ede's book does not exclusively insist upon the biographical circumstances, and his material, chosen chiefly from Gaudier's letters, contains much that is expressive of the sculptor's views on art and on his fellow artists; his obsession for Mass as opposed to Line is continually apparent, and the many things which he has to say about his own methods of technique and about the respective canons of Perfection and Beauty are extremely significant. Gaudier's letters are quoted almost entirely in full, and the only passages omitted are those which are either repetitive or of no particular interest; some of the letters, however, are of a nature so intimate and concern matters so personal that the interest of their contents is mixed with a certain displeasure, since the reader cannot but feel that he is peeping through the bedroom keyhole. But, in the whole round, the story of Gaudier and Miss Brzeska is a fascinating one and their life is here presented, by Mr. Ede, with the greatest possible sympathy and sensibility. His book is, indeed, one which every amateur of the Arts or onlooker at the battle of human nature will wish to read and read again.

T.C.

*Antoine Bourdelle, Maître d'Œuvre.* By Dr. Emile-Francois Julia. 9½ × 7½ ins., pp. 172, 56 plates. Paris: Librairie de France, 1930. 60 frs.

The author compares Bourdelle to one of those *maîtres d'œuvres* of the old cathedrals and groups his chapters round this conception of the great sculptor. He shows him as the inheritor of the traditions of carving preserved in his native Pays d'Oc, taking in the beauty of the ancient Roman and Gothic monuments and being trained by his father, who was a cabinet-maker, in the technique of wood-carving and of restoring antique furniture. He shows him as many-sided as a *maître d'œuvre* had to be, as architect, as sculptor, as designer of reliefs and frescoes, at the head of a group of devoted pupils who would benefit by his experiences and be inspired by his words.

Unlike English books on artists it does not



restrict itself to biography and criticism of the artist's work, but rises at times to a panegyric, comparing him to the great masters of the Renaissance and setting him above Rodin, Carpeaux, and Rude; while contemporary sculptors with whom Bourdelle must have had some points of contact are not mentioned at all. Surely this is not quite in proportion. For although Bourdelle is a very great artist and his work stands as a wholesome reaction to Rodin's emotional and impressionist sculpture, he is by no means the only one nor even the first to have led the way back to a more architectural and formal style. Our present generation is too much opposed to Rodin and his forerunners and still too near to them to see that the revolution they brought about in their time was just as far-reaching and as necessary if sculpture was to remain alive. If Rodin's works have little meaning for us at present, his deed was a big one and Bourdelle, who was his pupil for a time, knew it and built the new edifice on the ground prepared by his master, when he felt the time for the parting of their ways had come.

But it is this very enthusiasm of the friend and disciple which carries the reader away and makes him visualize the artist's personality, which in its breadth and strength, in its unceasing activity, certainly seems to have much in common with a Renaissance master's, or with those anonymous masters who ran the workshops from which the carving on the great cathedrals was directed and of whom we know so little. The biographer by reason of his predilection and constant occupation with his subject is apt to see only the positive side of it. However great and positive were Bourdelle's achievements in monumental and architectural sculpture, in the synthetic and yet searching rendering of his portraits, in his severe treatment of high and low relief, and in his beautiful fresco-paintings, there is also a negative side to be taken into account. If Bourdelle's work covers a wider field than that of his fellow-sculptors, if it has unusual breadth, it sometimes lacks the depth which we may find in a narrower range of work. Where you have the heroic gesture, the monumental weight and stress, the strenuously male vigour, you cannot at the same time have the more deeply human simplicity of nature, the moving beauty of an ordinary gesture, the charm and

(continued on page xii)

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## Book Reviews (continued from page xi)

*naïveté* of form and feeling often produced by a less skilled hand. Much of Bourdelle's sculpture appears eclectic and some of it mannered. Like other sculptors of his generation he was strongly impressed by the artistic rediscovery of Egyptian, Ægean, Byzantine, Gothic and Oriental art, and the repercussions can be traced in his work. They helped to develop his severe formalism and are milestones on the road towards the new style in sculpture; but not in every work is the impulse sufficiently amalgamated with the artist's own personality. The consciously archaic manner rightly employed on the Théâtre des Champs Elysées cannot be used too often without losing in spontaneity. The greatest artists combine male, female and childlike qualities. Bourdelle's work errs on the side of masculinity, and often stimulates the intellect more than the æsthetic sense. But his life's work represents an extraordinary effort in many directions, and if it suffers somewhat from this great distribution of energies, this is only the fault of his quality as a great personality.

The unobtrusive and skilful way in which all important works are mentioned and classed in this book and interwoven with the biographical account is admirable, and the many plates are well-chosen.

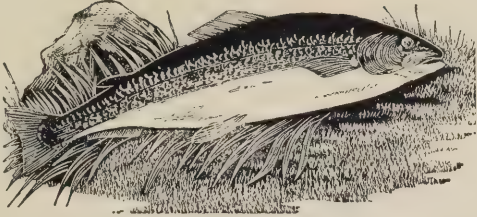
M.P.

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- Le Dessin Hollandais des Origines au XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle.* By M. D. Henkel. Van Oest, Paris. 380 frs.  
*Representative British Architects of the Present Day.* By C. H. Reilly. Batsford. 7s. 6d.  
*The Studio Painting Series.* Vol. I. 'Figure Studies.' The Studio. 5s.  
*The Composition of a Landscape.* By J. Littlejohns. Winsor and Newton. 3s.  
*The Art of Lettering.* Oxford University Press. 3s. 6d.  
*A Guide to Old French Plate.* By Louis Carré. Chapman & Hall. 13s. 6d.  
*The Art of the Body.* By Marguerite Agniel. Batsford. 12s. 6d.  
*The Art of Carved Sculpture.* Vol. I. By Kineton Parkes. Chapman & Hall. 21s.  
*Hieronymus Bosch.* By Walter Ephron, with a preface by Josef Strzygowski. Amalthea-Verlag, Leipzig.  
*The Ancient Bridges of the North of England.* By E. Jervoise. The Architectural Press. 5s. 6d.  
*Het Portret Door de Eeuwen.* By Just Havelaar. N. V. van Loghum Slaterus' Uitgeversmaatschappij, Arnhem. 1930.  
*Everyday Things in Archaic Greece.* By Marjorie and C. H. B. Quennell. Batsford. 7s. 6d.  
*Needle Weaving Embroidery.* Dryad Leaflet No. 79. The Dryad Press, Leicester. 6d.



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### Book Reviews (continued from page xii)

- Some Desiderata in Etching.* By Albert Morrison. Gowans and Gray, Ltd., Glasgow. 2s. 6d.
- English Embroidery Series.* By Miss L. F. Pesel. Vol. I., Double-running. Vol. II., Cross-stitch. Per volume, 3s. Batsford.
- Songs from Beaminster.* By H. Cooper Pugh. Pugh & Pugh, Beaminster.
- Mélanges Hulin de Loo.* Van Oest, Paris.
- A Little About Leech.* By the Rev. Gordon Tidy. Constable. 10s. 6d.
- La Gravure Italienne au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle.* By Augusto Calabi. Van Oest, Paris. 250 frs.
- Art in Australia.* No. 37. April 1931. 3s. 6d.
- The Lure of the Fine Arts.* By Frederick Colin Tilney, with a foreword by Sir George Clausen, R.A. Chapman & Hall. 15s.
- Showcard Writing and Design.* By A. H. Gibbings and R. L. Bailey. Crosby Lockwood & Son. 3s. 6d.
- Clothing without Clothes.* An Essay on the Nude. By Eric Gill. Golden Cockerel Press. 16s.
- Jan Siberechts.* By T. H. Fokker. Van Oest, Paris. 150 frs.
- The Art of Carved Sculpture.* Vol. II. By Kinton Parkes. Chapman & Hall. 21s.
- The Dryad Quarterly* No. 3. July 1931. The Dryad Press, Leicester. 4d.
- Letters of John Keats to Fanny Brawne.* With three poems and three additional letters. The Halcyon Press.
- Art in Australia.* No. 38. June 1931. Edited by Sydney Ure Smith and Leon Gellert. 3s. 6d.
- A Handbook of Celtic Ornament.* By John G. Merne, Jun. Pitmans. 7s. 6d.
- The Technique of Pastel Painting.* By L. Richmond and J. Littlejohns. Pitmans. 21s.
- The Technique of Flower Painting.* By Esther Borough Johnson. Pitmans. 25s.
- The British Museum Quarterly.* Vol. VI, No. 1, and Index to Vols. I-V. Published by the Trustees. 1931.

*Drawing and Design*, a school course in composition. By Samuel Clegg. 10 × 7½ ins., pp. 252; 228 illus. Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons Ltd. 16s. net.

A book sponsored by two such authorities as Sir William Rothenstein and Sir Michael Sadler cannot fail to interest specialists in art education. This is the second edition of the late Samuel Clegg's work. He was, as Sir Michael Sadler says, 'one of those great headmasters who helped in widening and deepening and colouring the ideals and practice of the new secondary schools in England during the critical years 1902-29.' To quote his other introducer, he 'has set down, simply and clearly, his methods for training children to draw and study form. He also states his reasons for pressing the case for a more serious consideration of drawing and the practice of simple crafts in the education of the child.' The new edition, enlarged, is well printed on a paper which serves equally for text, line blocks and half-tone. There are a few misprints—Pisunello, for instance (p. 242) and Girghenti (p. 200).

(continued on page xiv)!

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*Disegni di Modigliani.* With an introduction by Lamberto Vitali.  $6\frac{3}{4} \times 5$  ins., pp. 14; 31 half-tone plates and frontispiece. Ulrico Hoepli, Milano.

This collection of reproductions of Modigliani's drawings covers the last seven years of a life which ended in tragedy in 1920. They reveal an artist of genuine, if morbid, sensibility whose best drawings recall the healthier linear draughtsmanship of Rodin. The nudes of 1919, for example, remind one of the great sculptor's use of pure contour to express plasticity and character. In Modigliani's worst drawings one is irritated by the repetition of stylistic mannerisms such as the concave curve which is so often made to serve for the line of the nose, and the formal almond shaped eyes which appear in all the portraits, regardless of the age or sex of the sitter. Unfortunately it is these tricks of style which are seized on by followers and imitators.

The introductory text is followed by a most extensive bibliography. P. H.

*Christie's Season 1930.* Text by A. C. R. Carter.  $9\frac{3}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$  ins. Numerous illus. Constable & Co.

Messrs. Christie's annual record again brings before us, in a well-illustrated volume, many striking examples of the fluctuations in the market for works of art. Mr. Carter once more writes a lively account, packed with interesting and most diverse information, of the various sales in the 1930 season. Prices have been high, on the whole, in spite of trade depression. The 16,000 guineas paid for the Earl of Feversham's Hobbema established an English auction maximum for that painter. The National-Art Collections Fund paid 600 guineas for the Canova figure, of extreme technical accomplishment, which is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

*Robert Austin* (Masters of Etching. No. 25). Introduction by Malcolm C. Salaman.  $9\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$  ins., pp. 9, and 12 plates. The Studio Ltd. 5s.

Good drawing, a sense of design, and a sympathetic commentary all combine to render this an exceptionally pleasant volume. The intrinsic austerity of the black and white medium, with its peculiar fascination for men of Western civilizations, makes great demands

on the faculty of art appreciation. Not many recent plates have as powerful an appeal as the figure in *Woman Praying* (XI) with her emotional concentration; or the almost Hindu subtlety of the four animals in *Deer* (XII), a print of which is in the V. and A. Museum. The distribution through our educational institutions of such fine series must do much to stimulate a love for the better phases of modern art among the growing generation; and at their very moderate price this becomes possible.

W.G.R.

*Mario Sironi.* Arte Moderna Italiana N. 18. Introduction by Giovanni Scheiwiller; pp. 18, 28 half-tone plates. Frontispiece in colour. Hoepli, Milano, 1930. L.10.

The eighteenth number of a series admirably designed to give publicity to the work of contemporary Italian artists deals with a painter who is not well known in this country, although his work has been exhibited as far from Italy as New York. The reproductions in this volume show Sironi as a painter of cold academic temperament who makes a conscious search for monumental qualities of form in his painting of the human figure and of architecture, but who succeeds best when he allows a glimmer of human warmth to come into his work, as in the nudes of 1927 and 1929. In his compositions with figures, Sironi sometimes succumbs to a sterile formalism, and his drawings have the lifelessness of a certain type of competitor for the Prix de Rome.

P.H.

*The Kalendar and Compost of Shepherds.*  $10 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$  ins.; pp. 176. Peter Davies Ltd. 21s. net.

Messrs. Peter Davies Ltd. have republished and to some extent modernized Guy Marchant's book, with reproductions of the interesting wood-cuts which accompany the French edition of 1493 and the early English editions. For the sake of the wood-cuts alone this was worth doing. In addition, we are given a book typographically excellent, produced with scholarly care. Its literary origins are discussed in an introduction by Mr. G. C. Heseltine; and besides its archæological and æsthetic value it has a useful purpose, being made serviceable as a calendar for 1931.

R.S.





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# ARTWORK

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## PABLO PICASSO

By SIR MICHAEL SADLER, K.C.S.I., C.B.

PICASSO is an affiliated Frenchman. Born in Malaga in 1881, he was taught drawing by his father. As a youth he studied at a school of art in Barcelona. But he settled in Paris in 1903. He has shown himself very sensitive to some currents in the intellectual life of the city of his adoption. Paris has made him her own, but the strain of foreignness persists. Restless in mind and impressionable to new fashions in taste, Picasso is apt to overdo what his French contemporaries are thinking. So Burke, an acclimatized Irishman, overstated English feeling about the French Revolution. But England, or one side of England, admired Burke; and Paris, one side of Paris, became proud of Picasso.

He is a very accomplished artist, one of the most accomplished in Europe. Brilliant in his designs for the theatre, pathetic in his pictures and etchings of poverty, a deft and daring experimentalist in pattern, Picasso has been one of the most talked about artists of his time. He excites attention. He provokes curiosity. He has the gifts which make a man a superlatively good journalist. He has courage, sleight of hand, and a flair for the early future. When his manner has become a little shop-soiled through repetition, he changes it, without breaking the connexion with his clientele. Only a man with great confidence in himself, and with good reason for self-confidence, dare do what Picasso has done.

His reputation has been injured by the posterous phrases of his friends. 'Like a God

he destroys Nature itself when the impulse seizes him, and recreates it in a new and more wonderful form which he has discovered.' Some of the hot praise which has been poured on his pictures would be indiscreet publicity even for a patent medicine.

Picasso has less invention than Kandinsky: less weight than Braque: less persistency than Léger: less feeling for rhythm than Franz Marc: but more variety and volatility than any of them. His monochromes in blue: his experiments in non-representation: his Hellenistic portraits prove the versatility of his powers and the discontinuity of his purpose. There were good examples of each in the exhibition held at the Lefevre Galleries in June under the title of 'Thirty years of Picasso.' Monsieur Vollard's *La Vie*, which is reminiscent of Puvis de Chavannes, and Mr. Stoop's *Portrait de jeune femme* are fine pictures in rather self-conscious blue. On the staircase hung a little masterpiece in non-representational design. And *Les deux sœurs* is a striking work in the neo-classical manner.

Try as they may, those who arrange an exhibition of the work which an artist has done during thirty years cannot bring together all the examples they would like to show. At the Lefevre Galleries, Picasso's decorations for the theatre were absent. And in the upper room there were too many of his later 'abstractions,' like Soviet gargoyles, which would look better in wood or metal than in the flat. But a painter, like a poet, should be



judged by his highest achievements. Picasso at his best is a consummate artist. The world is not wrong in honouring his skill, his curiosity, his resourcefulness. His times have fallen in a difficult and exciting age. He has felt many winds of doctrine. He has an

immigrant, unsettled mind. There is an imp in him as well as a grave sense of beauty. He is typical of his time—inconstant, inquisitive, susceptible and rather superficial. But his best things do not lose their power. They have the undefinable quality of significance.

## TWO RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITIONS IN PARIS

*Provincial Museums—Portuguese Art*

By RICHARD CANTINELLI

AMONG many manifestations of the human spirit there is none more difficult to discuss than the painting of a bygone age. Poets, philosophers, men of letters, work upon a broad basis, the essential nature of which is common to the majority of mankind. Poetry, for example, has always the great works of the past, ageless and of lasting brilliance, to measure itself against: Homer and the Greek tragedians are still moving and intelligible to us. Indeed, the beauty of ancient poetry has been enhanced by the beauties of all its offshoots, and Pope, Shelley, Racine's tragedies and the 'Bucoliques' of André Chénier provide additional reasons for our attachment to the Hellenic genius.

With painting it is otherwise. Pictures or frescoes deteriorate or are destroyed, and nothing can restore their original appearance. What sort of notion do we get of ancient painting from the descriptions that Philostrates has left us? For such relics as remain, time and the restorers are remorseless enemies. When, in 1793, the Convention decided that the Louvre should be made an Art Museum, a Commission was appointed for the purpose: and its members were unanimous in deciding that Correggio's *Antiope*, Claud Lorrain's *Disembarkation of Cleopatra*, and many other canvases were 'restored' beyond all recognition. What would Leonardo think if he were to read the innumerable passages aroused by the Gioconda, which he would hardly know to be his own? The colouring has changed till daylight is more like moonlight. The delicate bloom of a Watteau sinks yearly into deeper shadow, and

where the colours remain they have formed into some new harmony; so that we, with our misguided cleverness and taste for a romantic melancholy, attribute to such works a charm which the painter had never even dreamed of.

It is as if painting had to pay this toll, in exchange for its power to be understood by the world, to be a kind of universal language. In return for its wide appeal its life is shortened.

It follows that the painter is less clearly guided than the writer by the models his predecessors leave him, and is forced to discover for himself the world which he wishes to express. The examples he refers to give up their secret only partially—often deceptively.

Imagine the difficulty, then, of discussing some ancient painter; of hunting down the origins, the successive phases and precise aims of an æsthetic system, of which the remaining traces are quite altered. The following is a pointed example. Last May, at the Orangerie in Paris, there took place the first exhibition of Masterpieces from Provincial Museums, arranged by the Curators of Public Collections in France. It was limited to French works of the 17th and 18th centuries. Two by Le Sueur were exhibited near to one another, the *Dream of Polyphilus* and *Diana's Hunt*. The *Dream of Polyphilus* has certainly never been retouched. We find in it the sound and easy craftsmanship of the period, with a basis of solid monochrome. But most of the lakes have faded or turned more golden; while the blues, no doubt made of permanent lapis-lazuli, to-day make a certain discord with



ZURBARAN *Still Life*

(By permission of Tomas Harris Ltd.)

PABLO PICASSO *Nature-Morte à la guitare*, 1922 (By permission of Alex. Reid & Lefevre Ltd.)





VELAZQUEZ *The Poet Góngora* (c. 1622)

(By permission of Tomas Harris Ltd.)



A. WATTEAU *Portrait of the sculptor Pater* (Musée de Valenciennes)





NUNO GONÇALVES *The Painter and João Gonçalves (?)* (1458-1462)

(By permission of D. José de Figueiredo)



LE SUEUR *The Dream of Polyphane* (Musée de Rouen)



N. POUSSIN *The Death of Adonis* (Musée de Caen)





H. FRAGONARD *Les Lavandières* (Musée d'Amiens)



E. LE S'EUR *Diana's Hunt* (Musée de Mans) (Right)  
LE NAIN *Venus chez Vulcain* (Musée de Reims) (Left)





*Maillol in his studio, with plaster figure for a group of three Graces*

## Two Exhibitions in Paris

their surroundings. In this composition, inspired by the celebrated 'Hypnerotomachia,' Le Sueur has added an elegant French simplicity to the rather empty and declamatory pomp of the monk Colonna. And what a delightful harmony there is between these living and moving figures, bathed in a broad general lighting without marked shadows. Nothing in their gestures or attitudes interferes with the ideal arrangement; a discreet harmony, a nobility without affectation, which calls to mind the best pages of Fénelon, or J. B. Moreau's music for the choruses of 'Esther' and 'Attalie.'

*Diana's Hunt*, on the other hand, attracts us by the velvety depths of its foliage, against which the admirable figure of the goddess is relieved. But an examination will show that this figure, or at least the nude part of it, is entirely repainted. The restoration has been done with surprising skill, and the figure which has thus been restored goes perfectly with the rest of the canvas; but it has to be admitted that Le Sueur never painted like this. The rest of these figures, and particularly the nymphs in the background, do bear the mark of Le Sueur.

So we have one of these pictures quite genuine and unaltered except by time; while the other owes much of its interest to a skilful restoration. Here, as usual, the truth must be sought for under changed colouring, and the ill—or good—deeds of restorers.

From all these considerations it follows that for anyone of real sensibility, who realizes the emotions of an artist behind the mere paint, who looks upon a work of art not as a dead thing nor as a pretext for oratorical outbursts, but rather as the revelation of a human consciousness, there is something about a retrospective exhibition of this sort that is as moving as a play by Shakespeare. The ghost tries to come from the tomb, but the sound of his voice and the meaning of his words are changed.

The Exhibition at the Orangerie was interesting, but its chief fault was obvious even to the least informed of spectators. The 17th century in France was not so well represented as the 18th. Now the 17th is the great century of French painting. The names of Poussin, Claude Lorrain, Le Sueur, the Le Nains, Mignard, Philippe de Champaigne and

Blanchard easily assure it the first place. It would be disrespectful to couple these names with even the greatest of the following century. Their compositions have a high inspiration, a scorn for anecdote, a sense of the universal and permanent, which raise them above their successors, though these be called Watteau, Chardin and Fragonard; charming painters, the first of them a genius and the creator of a new branch of æsthetics; but men given up above all to the idea of pleasing; more intent on grace than on grandeur, on detail than on general ideas; lively rather than philosophic.

Let us run through the catalogue. For a Poussin, two Le Sueurs, three Le Nains and a rather poor Mignard, we find five Fragonards, three Greuzes, three Lépiciés, three Nattiers, five Hubert Roberts, and a quantity of second-rate works, all worthy, at most, of appearing in the *Salon des Artistes Français* of to-day, and signed Schall, Vien, Lancret or Pater. Meanwhile, Claud Lorrain is represented by only one drawing, and the great Philippe de Champaigne is absent.

Let us hope that on another occasion the geographical position of museums, which has nothing to do with the history of art, will be disregarded, and a better-balanced selection made from the painters of each period. In this case the choice was limited solely to museums north of the Loire, with the exception of Dijon. Genius is not an affair of rivers and mountains and accidents of topography.

Among works of the 18th century which did honour to the Exhibition was one of the very first order: the *Portrait of the Sculptor Antoine Pater* by Antoine Watteau (Valenciennes Museum). The master of the *Fêtes Galantes* produced few canvases of so severe a character. According to M. Jamot, this portrait was executed about 1721, towards the end of the painter's life. It has a brownish tone which increases its feeling of dignity. There were other good portraits by Perroneau, Chardin and Greuze; and some homely scenes by Fragonard, inimitable in their easy grace and colour: notably the *Lavandières* of the Amiens Museum, in which the artist seems to have enjoyed the difficulty of bringing out the tone of the whites in a scene of full sunlight. We pass over those second-rate works, in which clever—too clever—painters who



were under the Academy's domination, reduce the grandiose myths of the ancients to a series of bedroom scenes which at times descend to the suggestive.

Hardly had the Exhibition at the Musée de L'Orangerie closed its doors, when, in the same Tuileries gardens, at the 'Jeu de Paume,' there opened the Exhibition of Portuguese Art (June to July). Here were to be seen, side by side and in strangest contrast, the old and new paintings of this country: the former much tinged with the exact and minute discipline of the Flemings, the latter showing the influence of the most hateful of modern schools: looseness of handling, crudity, and a forgetfulness of all sane traditions. But we owe the greatest thanks to its organizer, D. José de Figueiredo, the learned curator of the Lisbon Museum. He made it possible for us to see at close quarters two parts of a great retable preserved in the Palace of the Patriarch at Lisbon. This beautiful altar-piece was painted about 1460, and can now be ascribed with certainty to the great painter Nuno Gonçalves. It was brought to light some years ago by the efforts of D. José de Figueiredo. The art of Gonçalves is a magnificent flowering of the Flemish style on Portuguese soil. Part of this retable shows St. Vincent surrounded by illustrious person-

ages; on his left Prince Henry the Navigator, wearing a black chaperon; in front Alfonso V kneeling before the saint; and behind him the child who was crowned at a later date as Juan II. In this oil-painting the colour is laid direct on the wood, and not, as with the early Flemings, on a tempera ground. Looking at it, you can not help thinking of Jan van Eyck and Hugo van der Goes. A strange figure, this Gonçalves, whose work has been studied in various publications by the learned and regretted Émile Bertaux, notably in Vol. IV of André Michel's 'History of Art.' Some have gone the length of attributing to him the *Man with a glass of wine* in the Louvre, which till now has been considered to be a work of Jean Fouquet. To complete the Exhibition there were very fine manuscripts, precious furniture, and tapestries which gave a high idea of the glories of old Lusitania. A marvellous six-leaved lacquer screen, a Japanese work of the 16th century, lent by the Musée Guimet of Paris, demands a final note. It shows the arrival in Japan, in September, 1551, near the port of Funai, of the Portuguese vessel which Duarte da Gama commanded. Remarkable for the fineness of its lacquer, this work is a delightful compromise between a historic document and the most amusing of caricatures.

## ARISTIDE MAILLOL

By MARIA PETRIE

ANY attempt to place a living artist must of necessity be incomplete, for we are too close in time to judge his life's work fairly. Also we are not sufficiently well acquainted with the current of contemporary art in each country to tell accurately what national and what other influences have helped to shape his work and in what it differs from other work created under similar conditions. And yet it is only against a background that an artist can be truly placed and his relative value ascertained, for not even the greatest

artists are isolated phenomena, but form a link in a chain of development. It is not only by his positive achievement on the foundations of what he finds in his country and in his time that an artist ought to be judged, but also by what he fails to do or by what he leaves undone purposely.

One of the most fundamental and yet most difficult functions of the artist is his choice of means. Art is a constant choice of the most serviceable means to a particular end, a choice from an endless and embarrassing number of



A. MAILLOL *Statuette*





A. MAILLOL *Ile de France* (life size)



A. MAILLOL *Ile de France* (life size)





A. MAILLOL *Monument to Debussy, for St. Germain-en-Laye*

possibilities, each more alluring than the last, and each tempting the artist down a bypath. Maillol was nearly forty when he discovered that he preferred to express his reaction to the world in sculpture rather than in textile patterns or woodcuts. But even when an artist has discovered that he would rather express himself in one medium than in another, he has to decide on a further choice. The technique of each art is a complex thing, comprising elements which flatly refuse to exist side by side in one work. A painting, for instance, can be composed of colour, form, line, light and shade, depth, symmetry, to name only the more obvious qualities, but though it can contain several of them, it cannot contain them all, because some of them contradict each other and would at once destroy the unity which is the essential quality of any work of art. Rembrandt's emotional use of light and shade, for instance, excludes a rhythmical use of line, such as Botticelli's, from his pictures. Thus the artist has to make a second choice within the legitimate means of his craft and it is by this strict economy of means, by the rejection of the many different paths he might tread, that the value of an artist's work must also be assessed. This choice of means must, however, not be narrowed down so as to become specialization. That way leads to poverty. If the artist chooses to employ only two or three of the elements of his craft in any one work, he is free to employ a different combination in a new work and can thus avoid mannerism. What, then, directs an artist's choice of means? All art is movement, and each style, each impulse, when spent, must be followed by a new style, going off in another direction. At the decline of a style, therefore, the creative artist is hardly an entirely free agent, but seems to be propelled in a certain direction by some natural law.

Maillol, like several of his contemporaries, who were Rodin's pupils, like Bourdelle, Despiau, Milles, Hoetger, felt that after Rodin no further step in the impressionist manner was possible, and, like the others, carved out a new way towards calmer and more severe form. But, unlike the others, he did not turn to architecture for support, or let himself, by the rapid succession of re-discovered old styles, be stimulated to working in the archaic Greek or

Egyptian or Chinese manner. Fortunately for the world he was too unintellectual, too uncomplicated for that, and his reaction to the excited, hypersensitive illusionism of Rodin was a simple grandeur and poise which a neurotic, over-civilised world was instinctively longing for. Here is that stillness and greatness, that universality and humanity to be found in really great art. The robust sensuality of a man, the beautiful maturity of a woman, the naïveté of a child, Maillol carries them in himself and reveals them in his work. The touch of childish *gaucherie* in particular, so personal and so universal at the same time, puts the seal of greatness on his work, for only the great can be as simple as a child. Maillol's work differs from that of his time in that it is not of it and does not show the marks of it. He is handicapped neither by overmuch antiquarian knowledge nor by sensitiveness to the moods and movements of his age. As he stands out amongst the number of fine contemporary sculptors, so he smiles down on the younger generation, with their theories and fantastic contortions, like a Greek god on the philosophers and heroes.

Aristide Maillol was born in 1861, the son of a peasant at Banyuls, a village in the Eastern Pyrenees near the Spanish border. His talk is still much tinged with his native *patois*, and is difficult to understand, but his Southern use of expressive gesticulation will often convey his meaning more accurately than words and his fine hands seem to wish to form ideas in the air or to demonstrate how his work was created. His ancestors were fishermen and his grandfather was a well-known local character who lived chiefly by smuggling. Maillol went to Paris at the age of twenty-one and studied painting at the Ecole des Beaux Arts under Cabanel, whose teaching, however, did not inspire him. After ten years he turned to designing carpets and encouraged by Maurice Denis went on doing tapestries for six years, modelling only a few statuettes by the way before he turned to sculpture altogether. Since then he has been creating his goddesses and an occasional bust or male figure quietly and patiently, practically unaided, in the small workshop of his simple dwelling at Marly-le-Roi near Paris in summer, and at Banyuls in winter. His methods are the primitive ones of the stonemason, no elaborate mechanical



## Aristide Maillol

devices, nor band of trained helpers are at his disposal, and no big monumental commissions come from Municipal Councils. A blunt pocket-knife would have to serve him if he had no other tools, and he would somehow manage to express his ideas laboriously, but completely. He is not a quick worker and not even a very skilful one, but hundreds of beautiful drawings often done rapidly of some movement seen in the street come from his hand and slowly grow into new statues, which by their firm grip on earth, by their very weight and massiveness promise to be more lasting monuments of our time than the many official memorials in our towns. His wife has been the model most frequently used, for the proud women of his province were not to be had for such tasks, and this may account for a similarity of proportions in his work. But it is just this massiveness of limb which is so essentially sculpturesque and adds strength to the very stone. Maillol likes form to be round and not angular, 'pour remplir l'intérieur de la main.' This tactility, this healthy direct appeal to the senses makes his sculpture an universal manifestation. It has nothing of the passing fashion of a certain time which may cling even to intellectual or scientific activities. It belongs to all time because its form is rounded like most forms of nature and satisfies sense and spirit with the completeness with which only

the circle and the ball with their infinity, which is at the same time finality, can satisfy. Take a section through any part of a piece of sculpture by Maillol, and it will have a satisfying round form. Each part of the circumference faces towards the centre. There are no sudden dips and crevices dug into the surface of his statues, dictated by nervous or emotional reaction, no play of light and shade called in to supply what cannot be said by pure and simple form. Like its cubic and linear aspect also the surface of his sculpture is calm and serene, just animated by the ripple of a personal technique, as the calm sea may be stirred by a slight breeze. This son of Mediterranean fishermen and peasants who has gathered the essence of the rounded hills of his country and of the dignified carriage of its women under the blazing skies which obliterate detail and simplify all form, this sculptor may be a descendant of ancient Greek settlers on that coast. The personal appearance of the spare, smallish man, blue-eyed and thin-featured, reminds one strangely of the bearded figures on the pediment of Ægina. Certain it is that the appellation of *Néo-Grecque* often given to Maillol's works, is a very apt one. No classicism of Renaissance, Baroque or Empire has given us the spirit of Greece so pure and unadulterated and at the same time so living and unaffectedly modern.



## QUARTERLY NOTES

A CRISIS IN THE NEW ENGLISH ART CLUB, reproduced in this number, dates from a period when Mr. William Orpen (as he was then) had already distinguished himself as a painter, though he had left the Slade only five years before. He was in the habit of producing as a side-line a type of humorous, caricatural, or illustrative drawing, the subjects being topical or derived from such different sources as 'The Arabian Nights' and Max Beerbohm's 'Happy Hypocrite.' Some of these youthful works stand the test of about thirty years familiarity with them extremely well.

What the 'crisis' may have been we do not know; but it is evident that the figures, reading in order from the spectator's left, are Augustus John, William Rothenstein, Henry Tonks, Wilson Steer and Frederick Brown.

\*

Miss Margaret Barker is a young artist trained at the Royal College of Art. Her painting *Any Morning*, shown at the New English Art Club in 1929, was bought for the Chantrey Bequest while she was still at the College—an unusual distinction for a student. Other very promising work of hers was exhibited in competition for the Rome Prize. She has done a good many lithographs in a manner very much her own, as may be judged from the one which we reproduce. She has a taste for subject-matter of an unusual kind, or rather she finds subjects in ordinary incidents of life which most artists would pass by. This unhackneyed attitude of mind and the measure of her present accomplishment augur well for the interest of her future work.

\*

The two alabaster carvings which we illustrate are the work of boys at the Moseley Road Junior Art School, Birmingham. The photographs were communicated to us by Mr. Harold Holden, Director of Art Education at the Birmingham Central School of Arts and Crafts. Boys enter the Moseley Road School by scholarships at the age of thirteen and

remain there for three years. Direct carving in stone from life forms part of the course, and great stress is laid upon memory work and visualization—factors which were made so strikingly effectual under the direction of Mr. Catterson Smith in Birmingham, following on the tradition of Lecoq de Boisbaudran in France. The nature of the material to be carved determines the mode of procedure and the ultimate treatment.

The bird in the round is by D. B. Jones, aged fifteen. The relief of hens is by John C. Bullon, of the same age. Both pieces are carved direct in alabaster from life, and show a very high level of accomplishment with a pleasant free look which proves that the boys' individualities have not been repressed. In fact, we are reminded of the carvings on Gothic buildings, where the stone-cutter used his own vernacular and had reasonable play for his imagination within the limits ordained by his superiors. Personal variations on a prescribed formula gave vitality to that art, and the visual world within the craftsman's range was memorized and drawn upon for material.

D. B. Jones and John C. Bullon provide an interesting comparison with the drawings by Mexican boys, of ages varying from twelve to sixteen, which appeared in ARTWORK's Spring number. They are more sophisticated than the youthful Mexicans, perhaps, but less obviously so than the Viennese youngsters whose work has been seen in London.

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As a postscript to Mr. René MacColl's article on Mancini (ARTWORK Summer number), we insert the following note from Miss Lily Yeats :—

' Churchtown, Dundrum,  
' Co. Dublin.

' Mancini when in Dublin went about with an Italian man-servant who walked a few feet behind him. When Mancini saw anyone he knew approaching he bowed low, hat in hand, the man-servant doing the same.

' And then, if he liked you very much, he wrote you a letter in very bad French—then tore it up to show it



was a thing of nought, put it in an envelope and posted it and was in a fury if you did not answer by return of post.'

\*

The foundation at last of a 'Picture Lending Society,' with premises at 34, Bloomsbury Street, may be the beginning of a fruitful movement. The advantages, not unmingled with drawbacks, of circulating important works of art from one nation to another have been frequently discussed, and are still hotly debated, in connection with the great winter exhibitions at the Royal Academy. But so far as private collectors and provincial bodies of amateurs are concerned there seems to be every reason why a constant change of pictures, and hiring as well as purchase, should be encouraged. Mr. Walter Bayes and others have for years been advocating the institution of pictorial circulating libraries, so to speak, and something has already been done by the Arts League of Service with a scheme for 'travelling portfolios' of drawings. The Rutherford Collection, administered by the Manchester Art Gallery Committee, is lent in turn, sometimes in small doses, to various centres including schools of art and secondary schools. This Committee reports that 'appreciation of the value of the loans, quite apart from that proved by repeated borrowings, has been frequently expressed. A recent letter of thanks attributed the successes of students in the Board of Education Painting Examination in a very great measure to the study of the works borrowed. There have also been several instances where loans to schools of art have been opened to the public at convenient times and lectures given by the Principal and staff with very satisfactory results, both to the schools and the districts generally.'

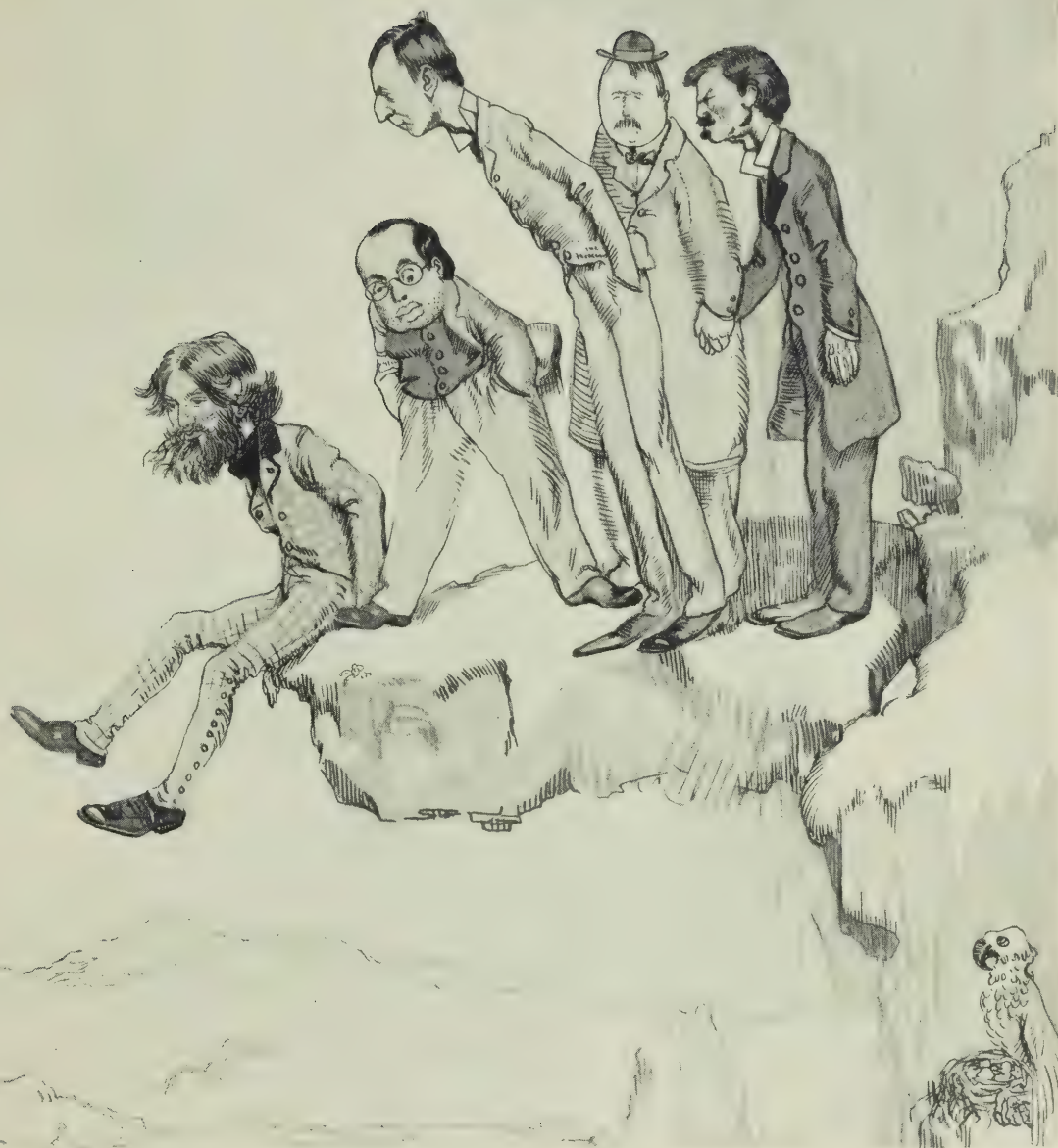
Picture-lending societies should help to overcome the difficulties that artists have, not merely in selling their work, but in getting it properly seen. Even if a picture is hung in an exhibition the want of attention which people

display in wandering round crowded shows is disheartening. A painting which has taken months to do may, with luck, receive two minutes' perfunctory scrutiny. If it is actually bought and hung in a house, in a permanent place, the owner usually views it, when the pleasure of novelty has worn off, with a jaded familiarity, and after a time is hardly conscious of its existence, except as an article of furniture. The casual visitor often has an air of thinking it bad form, like reading another person's letters, to look at the pictures on someone else's wall. The Japanese plan of having one picture up at a time and changing it at intervals certainly leads to a more appreciative understanding of works of art, and the picture-lending society would help to bring us into line with the Japanese. Moreover, the number of people who could afford to hire pictures is far greater than the number who can buy; and if a man could spare the money for a purchase he would be more likely to be satisfied if he had already tried the picture for a time in his own surroundings. In either case some money would go into the artist's pocket.

\*

The death of Jean-Louis Forain on July 11th, aged seventy-nine, removes a figure of international interest from the world of art. He was the last survivor of the great group of French artists centring on the Impressionist movement, among whom Degas influenced him most. His work was the subject of an article in *ARTWORK* Winter number, 1930, by M. Gabriel Mourey, whose friendship with him dates from forty years ago. J.-K. Huysmans in 'L'Art Moderne' (1883), and again in 'Certains,' was one of his earliest champions; his personality has been well described by Jacques-Emile Blanche in 'Essais et Portraits' and by Sir William Rothenstein in 'Men and Memories,' and Mr. Campbell Dodgson is the author of an essay on his etched work, in 'The Print Collector's Quarterly.'

william orpen  
1930 for 1904.



SIR WILLIAM ORPEN R.A. *A Crisis in the New English Art Club* 1904

(From the collection of Francis Berry Esq.)





(a) DAVID B. JONES *Carving in Alabaster*  
 (b) JOHN C. BULLON *Carved Alabaster Pane*  
 (By permission of the Central School of Arts and Crafts, Birmingham)

<i>Sayings of Artists on Art</i>		(HALL) 1385-1441.
AS I CAN.	Service (IXH) of John Dufay	
Thou, O God, dost sell unto us all good things at the price of labour.	Leonardo da Vinci	1452-1519.
The gathered secret treasure of the heart is manifested by the work, and the new creation which a man createth in his heart appeareth in the form of a thing.	Dürer	1471-1528.
Good painting is a music and a melody which Mind only can appreciate.	Michelangelo	1475-1564.
Let it be enough that you can put into practice that which you know; then, in good time, the hidden meaning will discover itself.	Rambrod van Sym	1600-1600.
Ideal perfection and beauty are not to be sought in the heavens, but upon the earth. They are about us and upon every side of us.	Reynolds	1723-1792.
A picture the effect of which is true is finished.	1600-1600	
Painting as well as poetry and music exists and exults in immortal thought.	Blake	1757-1827.
Nothing but a close and continual observance of nature can protect them [painters] from the dangers of becoming mannerists.	Caravaggio	1571-1609.
An artist must himself first be moved if he is to move others.	Miller	1814-1875.
When the operation of the spirit is weak, all forms are defective, and though the brush be active its productions are like dead things.	Ching Hao	1028-1107.



TO H—  
**F**AIN WOULD I SHAPE THE  
 WORLD ANEW  
 TO HOLD AND HOUSE MY  
 THOUGHT OF YOU  
 And Earth should be a golden frame  
 Which did those lovely dreams no shame  
 Alas I have no spell by day  
 To change my prison walls away.  
 But when the great arch overhead  
 Is purged of all that sullen red  
 And softer starlights find a stair  
 Down the wide Space of evening air  
 Through those shut hours I lie awake  
 And talk with spirits for your sake.  
 Then, with a fugitive low sound  
 The pale Olympians gather round,  
 23

Wearied of their viewless hill  
 Long vanished gods do haunt me still;  
 And one has the old happy air  
 With stars yet captured in his hair;  
 And one yet bears the silver bow  
 And one the red but snapt in two.  
 And then I hear a sound of strings,  
 And in the darkness someone sings:

**O** broken is the serpent wand  
 Eurydica farewell.  
 I shall not ever see your face  
 Lean out towards the world beyond  
 Lean out across the broad end space  
 Of weeping asphodel.

24

# EDWARD JOHNSTON

By C. M. WEEKLEY

EDWARD JOHNSTON has explored more widely and created much more variously in the arts of Writing and Lettering than any of his predecessors or contemporaries. Owen Jones was, within the narrow limits of the Gothic Revival, an industrious student of ornament, but his illuminations, such as *The Song of Solomon*, reveal no sympathetic feeling for the forms of letters. The black letter in his illuminated pages is hard and lifeless, smacking too much of the drawing-office. It is the antithesis of that supple grace which endows a page of writing with calligraphic beauty.

Morris achieved more with the Kelmscott Press than with the other crafts which he practised. Typography in our day owes an obviously heavy debt to his appreciation of the earliest printing. Himself a notable calligrapher, he was capable of recognizing the beauty in the types of Jenson and Koberger, with their immediate relationship to the scribe's pen.

It was left to Johnston, a later child of the Morris movement, to explore the whole field of letter-design and calligraphy with the guidance of modern research in Palæography and Epigraphy.

Scholars like Hübner and Sir Edward Maunde Thompson provided him with an elaborate historical survey of the Roman Alphabet and its Celtic and Gothic derivatives. His own studies being, of course, æsthetic rather than palæographical, have yielded a selection of three pre-eminently beautiful schools of writing. Johnston's round hand is derived, with certain very individual modifications, from the half-uncial hand exemplified in the 'Book of Kells' and 'The Durham Book,' MSS. of the 7th century. The version which he has evolved is simple and beautiful and provides in his opinion a very good copy-book hand for the few beginners who have sufficient time for a thorough grounding. The second type of writing, essentially the more practical, is based on the MS. of a Psalter (the direct outcome of the Caroline

hands) written at Winchester probably in the late 10th century. This MS. (Brit. Mus. Harley MS. 2904), very slightly modified, he now calls the 'Foundational Hand.' A kindred but later MS. 'Homilies and Lessons' (Brit. Mus. Harley MS. 7183) Italian, 12th century, is for him a perfect and satisfactory further development of such penmanship. This 12th-century style was revived, with some modifications, by the Italian scribes of the 15th century. From their writing was derived the superb Roman fount of Jenson. Both retained most of the best characteristics of the fine 12th century hands.

A further revival is associated with the Roman capital letters in the stone inscriptions of Italian Renaissance sculptors like Torrigiano. Roman stone-cut letters reached their greatest perfection about 100 A.D. The forms of these capital letters were not only adopted for stone inscriptions by Renaissance sculptors, but also influenced strongly the Roman founts of the early Italian printers. The hand which Johnston most frequently employs is based on the skeletons of the Roman inscriptional forms. These skeletons are given character by the natural use of the broad nib, and their ultimate finish has been influenced by the forms of the 12th and 15th century scribes.

Johnston's work as an eclectic craftsman has had an amazing influence on printing and lettering in our time. His text-book, 'Writing and Illuminating, and Lettering' is a remarkable achievement of 'much in little.' It is far more than an instructional manual of surpassingly clear and thorough exposition; the introductory chapter on 'The Development of Writing' is a brilliant critical summary.

Johnston's career (which as yet has found no recognition in 'Who's Who'!) is symptomatic of one whose marked natural bent has sought such original expression. His ancestry is well worth noting because it suggests hereditary clues to his own range of interests and marked humanitarianism. He is descended from the Gurneys of Earlham, who were noted in the latter part of the 18th century for their



## Edward Johnston

wide interests. The word *interest*, used in the above sense, dates approximately from their time and was a favourite word with them. Elizabeth Fry was Johnston's great grand-aunt.

As a child he lavished an innate devotion to letter forms on the texts which he wrote out on Sundays at home. He was never at school, and was taught at home by governesses and tutors up to the age of about thirteen. From fourteen to seventeen he played with electricity, and made apparatus at home. At seventeen he bought Loftus's 'Lessons in the Art of Illuminating' and occupied himself with it for some months. After this he turned again to his electrical toys, a lathe and carpentry. Later, while for two years in his uncle's city office, he read the first three books of Euclid during his journeys to town by the '9.15.'

At twenty-four he entered Edinburgh University to study Medicine. The medical course at Edinburgh was never completed owing to a breakdown in health. Something, however, of this scientific training and of his earlier scientific recreations may be discerned in Johnston's outlook. It has, at any rate, perhaps emphasized the natural precision of his method. The mental equipment of a rare craftsman seems to require a fine blend of æsthetic and scientific impulses. If a man would explore deeply the nature of materials and seek to create fresh beauty from their essential qualities, he must have a mind at once curious and precise. Such an attitude of mind was most notably a characteristic of Renaissance universality. Johnston, true to type, has an omnivorous curiosity. He has also a cosmic vision reminiscent of that revealed in the writings of the late T. J. Cobden-Sanderson. No doubt his friendship and collaboration with the latter were strengthened by this sympathy of outlook.

His medical studies at Edinburgh were not resumed, and Johnston owes his self-education as a craftsman to the admirable tolerance of a company-directing uncle, who did not dissuade him from a strong desire to immerse himself in the study of Art, but even suggested that he should pursue it.

He wrote to Mr. R. Anning Bell, R.A., who was then enjoying a high teaching reputation at Liverpool, saying that he wished to work at

book-production. He added that it would, presumably, be possible for him to learn to draw in about two years! Mr. Bell, to whom I am indebted for courteous permission to reprint his reply, wrote as follows:

'University College, Liverpool.

Jan. 22, '98.

Dear Sir,

I enclose the prospectus of our classes. You would have to begin drawing from the casts—we do not teach drawing from the flat except to a small extent in the designing ornament class. You would go on, of course, to drawing from the life, all the time practising designing as an accompaniment. I do not think the designing should be restricted to book-decoration only, although that is your ultimate aim. All forms of designing help each other, and I do not think that a good designer should be confined to one sort.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

R. A. BELL.

I ought to say that two years is not enough to turn out a really good draughtsman—at least it would be an exceptional case.'

Johnston came to London, and instead of following any School of Art course, studied manuscripts in the British Museum. He had been introduced by an architect friend to the stimulating encouragement of Professor W. R. Lethaby, who advised that course. Through Mr. S. C. Cockerell he obtained a commission, an address on the marriage of Neville Lytton to Miss Blunt early in 1899.

In autumn, 1899, under Lethaby's ægis he began his class in writing and lettering at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, then in Regent Street, where his pupils included Eric Gill, Graily Hewitt, Lawrence Christie, Noel Rooke and T. J. Cobden-Sanderson. For the last thirty years he has taught at the Royal College of Art.

Beyond the profound influence of his writings and teaching, which have spread over Europe and America, his own work, though slender in amount, has been extremely varied. He has lately written pages in a very elaborate Gothic hand, using a brown ink, delightful essays in antiquity with, however, the very individual character which his hand always yields. His work for printers began with Cobden-Sanderson's Doves Press. In a note on his connection with the Doves Press, contributed to a fine American edition of



Cobden-Sanderson's 'Ecce Mundus, the Book Beautiful,' Johnston writes of the printer: 'When we moved to No. 3 Hammer-smith Terrace, only two doors from the Press, he frequently brought me small commissions to draw initial letters, headings and the like, which were afterwards engraved on wood.'

'And he knew me well enough to "pitch into" me if what I had done was not up to time or standard.'

A few Doves Press proof-sheets with Johnston's preliminary experiments for the treatment of initials and head-pieces are to be found in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Johnston has not, in most ways fortunately, been dependent on his craft for a livelihood. No doubt the 'up to time' reference is something of a confession! His extreme detachment, an almost yogi-like indifference to the exigencies of time and commercial profit, has very much limited the actual amount of his work for printers or other patrons.

S. C. Cockerell introduced him to Count Harry Kessler, for whose private press editions Johnston has produced much of his best printing work. In his 'Type Designs of the Past and Present,' Mr. Stanley Morison writes thus of the Johnstonian conquest of Germany: 'In 1910 the Johnston teaching was introduced into Germany by one of his pupils, Fräulein Anna Simons, now of the Bremer Presse, Munich.'

'The school of calligraphers practising the teaching of Johnston and Gill, which has arisen since the year 1905, has in its hands the whole of German type-design, with the exception of the cruder kinds of advertising letter.'

Gill's title-pages for the Insel-Verlag, in the style of a Roman stone inscription, and Johnston's use of 'versals' for the title-page of 'Twelfth Night' in a German translation, are among the most satisfying of such works. The 'Hamlet' from Count Kessler's 'Cranach Press' at Weimar might well be regarded as the most remarkable printed book of recent years. The type, based on the lower case of Schoeffer, was designed by Johnston, the woodcut illustrations were the work of Gordon Craig. The book is worthy of so rich a collaboration. At the present time Johnston is designing an upper case italic type to go with the lower case italic type which he

drew for Count Kessler in 1913. This is being cut by the accomplished hand of Mr. G. T. Friend, a pupil of the late Mr. E. Prince.

To Mr. Frank Pick, once Advertising Manager and now General Manager of the London Underground Railways, Johnston was introduced by Mr. Gerard Meynell. Mr. Pick's patronage of an important group of modern poster designers provides a large chapter in the history of Poster Arts.

In 1916 Johnston was commissioned to design a block letter, both capitals and lower case, for the Underground Railways to be used for the station names and for poster printing; for the London General Omnibus Company he experimented further in 1920 with block letters to produce the perfect destination label for London's buses. Block letters present an unusually difficult problem in proportion and weight; where, moreover, there is a question of legibility from some distance, the task calls for definitely scientific treatment. Very few passengers on Underground Railways or buses can be aware that the exquisite legibility which serves their convenience is the work of a fastidious scribe and one of the very few outstanding craftsmen of the age. Not content with the high honour in which 'Writing and Illuminating, and Lettering' is held, he has been planning for some years past another volume which is to express considerations and technical improvements gathered during the twenty-five years that have elapsed since the publication of his first text-book. The latter has already passed through very many editions.

The importance of calligraphy to the art of the printer resides, as Cobden-Sanderson has well said, in the dependence of fine printing upon penmanship and ornament wrought by hand. 'Handwriting and hand decoration of letter and page are at the root of the Book Beautiful, are at the root of Typography and of woodcut or engraved Decoration.'

The beauty of really good writing, the calligraphic quality itself, is something that eludes any satisfactory analysis; as well might one attempt to dissect the rhythmic beauty of a great ballerina's movements. The lively, flexible touch, the subtly felicitous flow of letters, words and lines, are in the very best



performance most surely from the hand of one born for the job. 'Nascitur non fit' applies as obviously to the genuine calligrapher as to the poet or any other creator who is the real thing. Johnston's own criterion for beautiful writing is that it should embrace the three cardinal qualities of Legibility, Beauty and Character. Beauty and Character are inseparably blended. Roger Fry has said: 'Mere regularity, evenness, neatness is no doubt more agreeable to the eye than capricious variation of direction, proportion and curvature, but it can scarcely give one a definite æsthetic pleasure.' To which one might reasonably add that it depends on 'the eye!'

Johnston's writing has a degree of character beyond the art of his contemporaries. The character is impressed not only on the writing itself, but on the whole page. In the design of Writing, Lettering and accompanying orna-

ment he is altogether unrivalled. He remains faithful to pens of quill and cane or reed for small or very large work, but for moderately large work he frequently uses steel nibs of which he grinds the sides and the edges with very great care.

Eric Gill, his one-time pupil, has designed a block letter fount for the Lanston Monotype Corporation. His lettering in stone-cut inscriptions or painted wood panels has helped to inspire the increasingly better standard of such work revealed in many modern shop signs and bank premises. For all this and the introduction of Writing and Lettering as an important subject in the curricula of Art Schools, the pioneer influence of Johnston enjoys a happy responsibility. The author of so much good has consistently avoided the public recognition which nowadays is too readily obtained by lesser men and women.

## BOOKBINDINGS BY MADELEINE KOHN

By PHILIP JAMES

BOOKBINDING considered as an art finds itself to-day in a position very different from that which it occupied from the time of the Renaissance down to the 19th century. The enormous increase in the output of literature and modern methods of book-production have together virtually killed what was for three centuries an honourable and profitable craft. Books are no longer bought in sheets and covered by the binder in a particular style chosen by each patron, or in the style created by the binder himself, who, by virtue of original and tasteful work, was often a very real artist. For the immeasurably wider reading public of the present day leather bindings are too expensive. But the decoration of leather-covered books will still be required as long as scholars win prizes and book collectors choose to clothe their more select specimens in an appropriate manner. The former receive from the hands of the distinguished visitor an essentially commercial product which is usually decorated in a style

seldom offensive, never original, and always insipid. The latter alone save the art of book-binding from total extinction, although the cult of the first edition has of late deterred the collector from exchanging the original publisher's boards and dust-cover for a stronger library binding.

It is clear, then, that the scope of the modern *relieur-doreur* is strictly limited. This perhaps accounts for his (or more often her) rather different conception of the duties of the patron, who is now expected to commission and to look upon a binding as a work of art and not merely as a protective cover. This is not unreasonable as long as the modern bibliophile regards his acquisitions of the work of the select presses as vintage copies to be sipped delicately and sparingly. The gourmet does not decant his Château Yquem into a vinegar bottle. When the historian of the art of 20th century bookbinding comes to take up his pen he will call attention to the sway exercised during the first quarter of the century

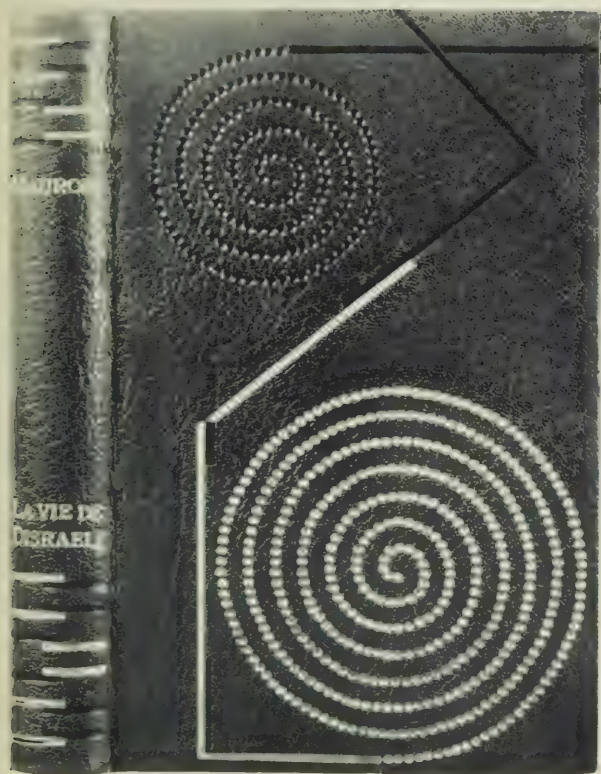




Fig. 1



Fig. 2







WILLIAM DOBSON *Family of Sir John Danvers c. 1635*

by what we may call the Cobden-Sanderson tradition, which finds expression in the able work of such fine craftsmen as Mr. Douglas Cockerell and the Messrs. McLeish. He will also remark the beginning of a new style before the War in Mr. Rickett's designs for the Vale Press, a style developed by Miss Sybil Pye. To say that she has made a permanent contribution to the art of bookbinding is not excessive, and there must be few binders in this geometric style who would not acknowledge her pioneer work. Its influence is reflected to-day chiefly in the work of French binders, notably Paul Bonet, Geneviève de Léotard, and above all Pierre Legrain, whose premature death two years ago is so much to be regretted. In Sweden this style is practised by Herzog and Söner, whose work was to be seen at the recent exhibition of Swedish art in London, and now attention may be called to a small group of bindings executed by an English craftswoman, Madeleine Kohn. These are being shown by Messrs. Bumpus, Oxford Street.

Miss Kohn was trained as a bookbinder under the supervision of Charles McLeish senior, who was Cobden-Sanderson's finisher for sixteen years. To-day she does most of her forwarding in Paris, and although she brings her books to England to be decorated her vigorous and original designs betoken a direct contact with the modern Continental style. In common with all the binders mentioned, and, indeed, with artists in other materials, she shows a complete disregard for the conventional treatment of a rectangular field. Borders have been scrapped, and in place of the old traditional symmetrical designs in gold tooling we find bold patterns made either by the inlaying of geometric shapes in leather of colours or substances contrasting with the groundwork, or by simple lines supported by impressions from a few simple tools, or sometimes by a combination of the two.

This return to the use of coloured inlays is a pleasing and characteristic feature of the

present style, which has something of that architectural quality which distinguishes all the best periods of the art. Miss Kohn's technique differs from that of some other binders inasmuch as she does not cut away the groundwork and inlay the leathers of different colours but applies the pieces, pared to the minimum thickness, by means of a hot-press (Fig. 1). It is only very rarely that she permits herself to comment on the contents of the book which she is binding. This dangerous practice, introduced in the 19th century, has in the past been responsible for some appalling bindings in which attempts, predestined to failure, have been made to translate into terms of gold tooling billowing landscapes and statuesque nudes. But here (Fig. 2) we see a commendable restraint. The formalized chain pattern, made up from simple tools, and the design of the letters with their slightly nautical flavour, all in gold on a sea-green morocco, are not too naturalistic in their reference to the beautiful book within. It will also be noticed that Miss Kohn refrains from another trick to which modern binders are sometimes given—the decoration of a book with a design which spreads over both covers of the book. I have noticed that bindings of this kind are not usually designed by a practising craftsman, who would shrink from making a cover which necessitated the book being opened face downwards! The designs here illustrated also show a respect for the material used. Morocco leather is in itself good to look at and good to handle, and when it is crushed its texture makes an admirable background to a well-regulated, properly spaced design. Calf is now recognized to be quite unsuitable, for it will not stand either use or disuse; but Miss Kohn occasionally indulges in lizard. In conclusion, it must be counted to Miss Kohn's credit that she designs all her tools. The downfall of many prospective binders is assured when they purchase their acanthus leaves and floral sprays from a purveyor of materials for handicrafts.



# SOME ENGLISH PORTRAIT DRAWINGS

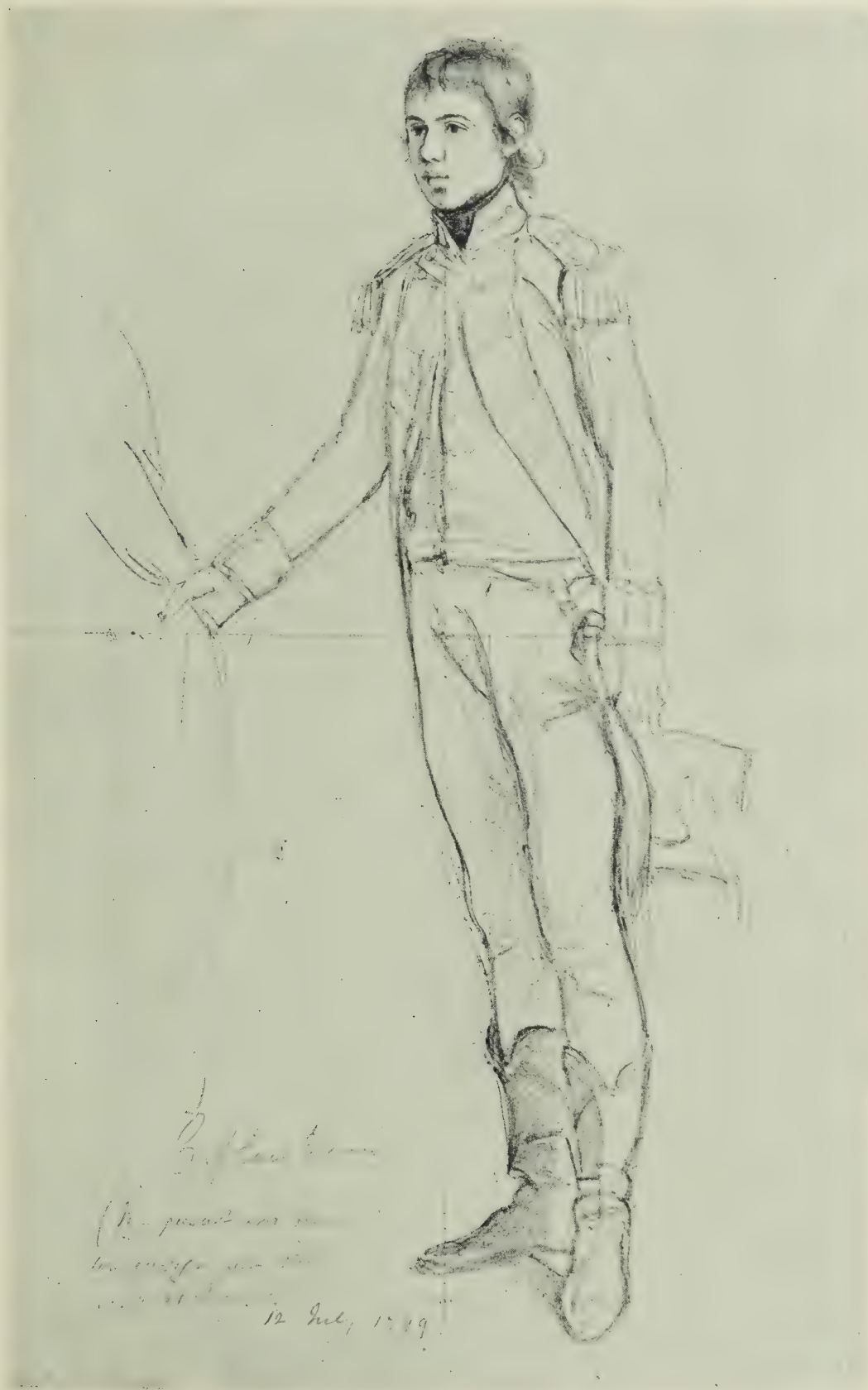
By RANDALL DAVIES

IF I were ever to overhear somebody telling somebody else that I did not collect drawings, but accumulated them, I should have no difficulty in framing a suitable reply—or rather interposition; for I have no more shame in confessing that I accumulate than in asserting that I collect. In fact I do both. And so it comes to pass that out of my accumulation I have collected a good many portrait drawings and kept them away from contamination by the others, and out of this collection I have, with the assistance, or perhaps I ought rather to say, under the supervision, of the Editor, made a selection for reproduction by way of illustration of a short lucubration on the concatenation or stringing together of this portion of my possessions, so far as it relates to portraits drawn on British soil—how difficult it is to put into words even the smallest fact without a possibility of its being misunderstood!—I mean drawn by persons situated at the moment of their execution—execution of the drawings—within the British Isles.

Frankly, I am not completely satisfied with the selection of these illustrations; but at the same time I am quite ready to admit that had it been left to me it might have been much worse. Window-dressing is a fine art on which even the slightest bias of personal consideration may have a very injurious effect; and when I think how different the Ten Commandments might have been I am not at all sure that the Editor has not been a great deal kinder to my collection than I could have been myself. At any rate, one cannot expect to have all one's favourites in the limelight, and those that have not already had their turn may get it later on—if they deserve it. James Figg I am most sorry about, because he was the English Gladiator, and gladiators are so scarce in England—even in bedrooms—and Richardson drew him so

capitally *ad vivum*. This portrait will, no doubt, find its way to the N.P.G., but whether by way of sale, donation or bequest I cannot at the moment determine. The very name of Figg—but there! Let us leave trifles and begin to chronologize.

Reduced to chronology, the first of the series here reproduced is the group which is endorsed in an old handwriting *Family of Sir John Danvers, brother to the Earle of Danbie*. This fortunate circumstance at once gives it an historical interest which, it may be admitted, its inherent artistic merit would hardly have earned for it. It is on a very old mount, and has evidently been slightly cut down before being mounted, so that the inscription—it could never have been a signature—in the right-hand bottom corner stops short at 'A. van.' No one in his right mind is likely to dispute the conjecture that the missing remainder was 'Dyck,' but that is not to claim the drawing as from the master's hand. I was fortunate enough, when this drawing was shown to me nearly a quarter of a century ago, to murmur the name of Dobson, before turning it over—and sure enough on the back in quite an early hand was 'Dobson' written in pencil. I described this drawing, by the by, from memory in 'Chats on Old English Drawings' as being in black chalk on grey paper. It is really in pen and bistre on white paper. As a work of art it is of little, if any, value, but apart from its interest in connection with Chelsea, where Sir John Danvers lived, close to the house where a little over a century earlier Hans Holbein had made his famous sketch of the More family—apart from 1528 and all that, the drawing was most probably made by Dobson in connection with a picture by his master, either already painted or to be painted. The date, from the evidence of the Chelsea Parish Registers, would be about



A. W. DEVIS *Captain Harris, 1799*





GEORGE ROMNEY, *Sisters Contemplating on Mortality*



C. R. LESLIE Miss Mimma Constable



THOMAS ROWLANDSON Mrs. Barry of Sobho





JAMES WARD *Family group*



## Some English Portrait Drawings

1635, when the eldest child, Elizabeth, who married Viscount Purbeck, was about six. The grown-up lady standing on the right I cannot identify, but the mother is Danvers' second wife, Elizabeth Dauntsey of Lavington. How thrilling it would be if the picture turned up—the youngest Danvers child (not on in this scene) left numerous descendants who might have used it in successive generations as a target for their childish archery:

'I shot an arrow into the heir'  
and I may yet have the glory of excavating the picture's tattered remains from some dealer's dump or aristocratic attic.

From Dobson to Romney is a long jump; but that is the Editor's fault. I offered him all the regular stepping-stones—Lely, Kneller, Richardson, Hogarth, Gainsborough, Worlidge, Reynolds—but he lightly skipped over them all, politely perhaps I should have said, on the ground that they had been done before, or weren't done enough, or something of that sort, so we must skip likewise and come down to more recent times. After all, it is often the smaller fry that make up the tastier dish, and, once past Romney, society becomes very mixed, and none the less interesting on that account.

I have got lots of drawings by Romney—they used to be very cheap. One was two-pence, another sixpence, and I had a whole bunch of quite good ones from kind Mr. Leggatt in Cheapside that would have worked out at not very much more than that apiece. I let Herbert Horne have one or two of the best—the Gower children, I think, was mine; but we both used to buy them from old Mr. Parsons in those days. The last one I got was in the window at the 'Old Times' furnishing establishment in Victoria Street, framed, for a guinea—and I had the temerity to try and get it for a pound. It is a real good one of a lady seated by a plinth, but I suppose the *cognoscenti* supposed it was a reproduction, and the noncognoscenti a thing not worth looking at, and so it now belongs to me. But the Editor preferred the two slighter and smaller sketches of *The Sisters* for reproduction here, and it is certainly interesting to compare them with Dunkarton's mezzotint of the finished subject (I forget who the ladies are or to whom the picture belongs), which is inscribed *Sisters Contemplating on Mortality*.

Challoner Smith describes it thus (Dunkarton No. 44):—

Sisters. Two three-quarter lengths standing, the elder in centre directed to front, facing and looking towards her sister on right, who is in profile looking towards tomb on left, at which the elder points with her right hand. Ruins in background. Under, J. Boydell excudit. G. Romney pinxt. R. Dunkarton fecit. *Sisters Contemplating on Mortality*. Published Sept. 20th 1770 by J. Boydell engraver in Cheapside London.

I have also a third study of the subject, of the same size, and doubtless done at the same time. Or were these very tiresome sisters, insisters perhaps, whose contemplations required more consideration than the conventional sitting for a portrait? However rough and untidy these sketches of Romney's may have seemed to the last generation—and whole bundles of them were kicking about in those happy old days—there is a real charm as well as a real value in them which nowadays people are quicker to recognize. They are the 'photographic basis' behind his magnificent Academy exhibits, and, like the sketch book of John Robert Cozens in which we find the almost prosaic pencillings from which came forth his wonderful water-colour renderings of Italian scenery, they show how little help genius needs in the way of a photograph.

The attribution to A. W. Devis of the very charming pencil drawing of *Captain Harris* is probably right, but I do not vouch for it. Some of the inscription has been 'strengthened,' so that what looks like the newest part of it is probably the oldest, namely, the date, 12 July 1799, when 'Captain Harris' had less than a year ago been 'an ensign at the siege of Seringapatam,' and was then seventeen and a half years old. But he was not 'the present peer' till 1815 or later. If somebody had not inscribed this drawing with the name of Devis I should have been inclined to give it to James Ward, whose family group of rather later date forms the subject of another plate.

That Thomas Rowlandson is more widely known as a caricaturist than as a portrait painter is hardly within the realm of dispute. But what is portraiture if it has not an admixture of caricature? And what is caricature if it is not based on a portrait? How far the limits of strict portraiture have been stretched in the direction of caricature in the case of *Mrs. Barry of Soho* can only be imagined, as



### *Some English Portrait Drawings*

no one but Rowlandson is known to have recorded her appearance. But I bought this drawing—I think it was from Mr. Gunn, who used to have a shop in Bedford Street, Strand, years ago—with two others of much the same sort, one of which, *Brandy Nan*, might frankly be called caricature and the other, a charming nymph called *Miss Cambridge*, seated on a gentleman's knee (she is a blonde) is portraiture, pure and simple. Perhaps Mrs. Barry was a friend, or an acquaintance, of both; and perhaps, therefore, her picture may be somewhere in the middle distance between theirs.

Rowlandson grew coarser as he grew older; but for an earnest of the gentler spirit that was later to pervade the 19th century, let us turn to the drawing by the ingenious Mr. Fuseli, whose varied efforts in the realms of painting have never as yet attained a popular success that could be called a valid passport to immortality. Never mind if you find this paragraph a trifle fluty—it is in harmony—or as near as I can get—with Mr. Fuseli himself. His paintings are apt to seem a little ridiculous, but his drawings are simply delicious. In pure portraiture he is a blank; but, like Rowlandson, he has given us typical figures which, however near to caricature, are in some cases obviously portraits, as here. He has given us the place and the date—‘Charlton, 1805’—but, unlike Rowlandson, he has not disclosed the lady's name. Already we seem to breathe a more delicate atmosphere, and to see Rowlandson and Gilray making way for Doyle and Leech.

James Ward, R.A. (he seems to have signed nearly all his drawings in his old age, and seldom omitted the R.A.) was certainly one of the best draughtsmen to be found in the British School. And one may well say ‘to be found,’ for he is not nearly ‘found’ enough as yet. Several great batches of his drawings have been sold in recent years, and they have drifted into various odd corners. I unearthed a parcel last year, and this family group is out of it. Whom it represents I am unable to tell, and it may take me a good deal of pleasant record-hunting to settle the question. But as to the delightful quality and feeling of the drawing and subject there is no doubt. It seems to me to be a perfect balance between formality and freedom; between the R.A. and the Paterfamilias. And this is, I think, typical of most

of Ward's drawings; they are stately without being stuffy. Even a sketch of President Benjamin West's lapdog had enough dignity about it to commend it to the Council of the Royal Academy for inclusion among their archives.

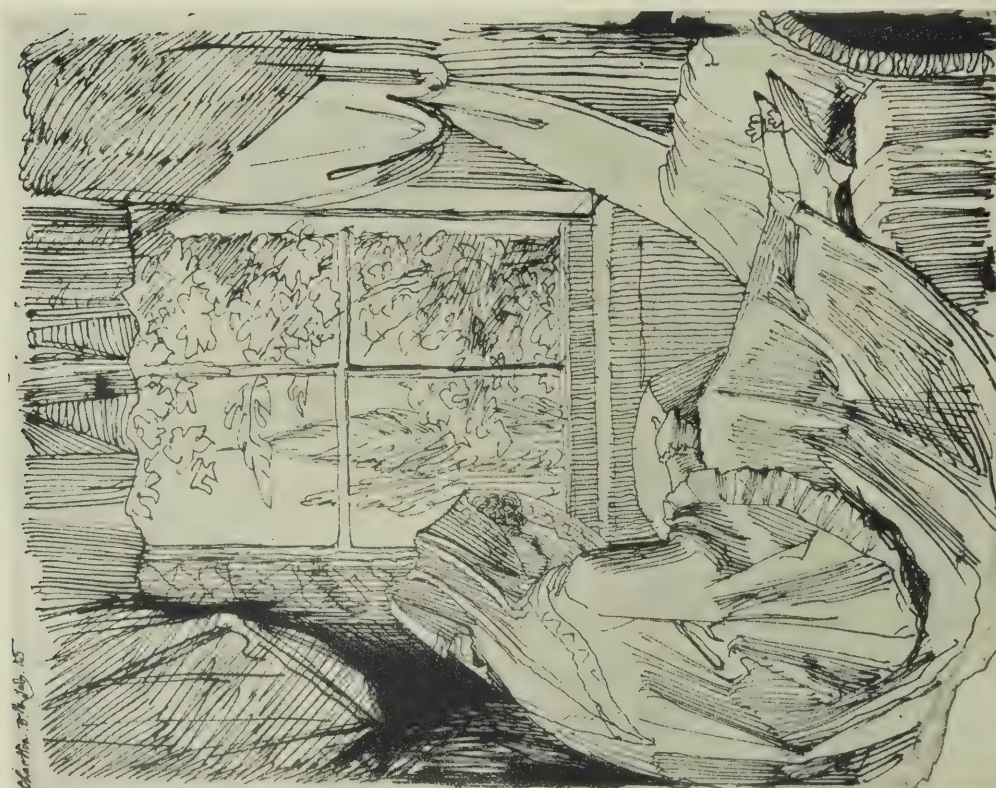
David Wilkie's drawing of King William IV is dated 1833, in which year, Redgrave informs us, he was painting the Duke of Sussex in Highland costume, having done ‘Silly Billy’ in similar disguise a year or two earlier. I bought this in Edinburgh (from a West Riding Yorkshireman), where it was most probably done, for the modest sum of £2—it is a large drawing, about 18 inches by 12 inches, in pencil, tinted with water-colour. Who can say that I might have done better than that in Aberdeen? One or two other slighter pieces of Wilkie's I found also in Edinburgh, for which I was asked still less. One very capital pen-study of a girl in a huge Spanish hat I was at first inclined to hope might prove to be a Goya—but the initials D. W. are worked into the hatching of the background, and I content myself with the romantic possibility that Wilkie and Goya met in a tavern (? *posada*) and exchanged ideas about drawing ladies in large black hats. Some of the Goyas have just a suspicion of Wilkiery about them that might lead to interesting discoveries of other cases of mutual influence. I have strong reason, for instance, to suspect that Watteau influenced Hogarth, during his short sojourn in London in 1727—though I have not as yet found any decided Hogarthian flavour in the *œuvre* of Watteau.

I see no reason for doubting the endorsement on C. R. Leslie's pencil drawing of Miss Minna Constable, although it is not in a contemporary handwriting. But who was Minna? Constable had only three daughters, and their names were Maria, Isabel and Emily. His only mention of Minna is in an undated letter to Leslie (No. 80 in the recent publication) while she was still very young: ‘Your coming has done my dear Minna much good—I hope if the Influenza has begun with her (and she is glad to correspond as she stays from school) it may also end with her.’ One wishes it might have. But, again, who was Minna? One may perhaps suppose she was Maria under an alias. She looks to be a nice plump comfortable creature, at any rate, in spite of



SIR DAVID WILKIE *William IV* 1833





HENRY FUSELI *Unknown Lady* (1805)



SIR DANIEL MACNEE *Lady Macnee*

### *Some English Portrait Drawings*

her childish ailments, which included a severe attack of scarlet fever (if she was indeed Maria), so perhaps her father was right in saying that Leslie had done her a lot of good.

Thanks chiefly to the existence of a Royal Academy of their own, some of the best of the Scottish painters have hardly ever been heard of in Bond Street, and when I offered to guess the author of a little portrait sketch that was hanging in the French Gallery recently, and guessed it right first time, I was favoured with glances of astonishment qualified by respect. It was by one of the Presidents of the Scottish Academy, Sir Daniel Macnee, and I was lucky enough to have found the drawing here reproduced in Edinburgh a week or two earlier, so I had learnt all about him. It is in all probability a study of Lady Macnee, who is also the subject of a beautiful picture of his which she gave to the Scottish National Gallery a year or two ago.

Finally, in point of date, there is Linley Sambourne's sketch of Gladstone which, although a year or two earlier than the actual inception of my adventures in collecting, is nevertheless a landmark in the debatable

country between art and commerce which it has, ever since I can remember, been my pleasure and privilege to occupy. Again and again have I tried to bring about a legitimate union between the two, but all I can say is that if I have not been commerce's best man, I hope I have never given art away. This drawing, a corrupt gift, was selected and put into my guilty hands by the artist as a little token of his appreciation of my selecting him as the only one capable, at that date, of designing a card of invitation for a ceremonial occasion—the cutting of the first sod of a railway through the sacred fastnesses of 'the Dukeries.' Unfortunately, his magnificent design was wasted, because his Liberal sympathies had mastered his sense of respect for the mighty, and the principal figure in the symbolical composition was a navvy who simply towered over three coronets lying on the foreground. Another drawing of his that I still hold on to (though it really belongs to the railway company) is a caricature of himself clinging to a telegraph pole, as 'patience on a monument,' because his account was not settled promptly. I wish I had more.



*To Randall Davis  
from Linley Sambourne  
June 1892.*



# HENRI-MATISSE AS A DRAUGHTSMAN

By HERBERT FURST

CÉZANNE, Van Gogh, Matisse, Picasso—as it were the Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the four Gospellers of the new æsthetic faith—how angry they make the narrow followers of tradition. Matisse especially. Cézanne, they say, was a poor *raté*; Van Gogh was notoriously mad; Picasso a *blagueur*; thus the three are easily disposed of; but Matisse? He is plainly beyond a joke. He can't draw, and because of his own palpable incapacity he spreads the Gospel, 'Except ye be converted and become as little children ye cannot enter the Kingdom of Art!' Preposterous!

Now, of course, there is something in this view. The problems of life and of art are always difficult because there is *something* in everything. So that Matisse's view point, for instance, is attacked not by any means only by the traditionalists. Talking only the other day to a now famous member of the same circle, once known as the 'Fauves,' I mentioned Matisse. What did he think of the Matisse show now 'on' at Georges Petit's? The answer was an eloquent shrug of the shoulders, and no more.

It is seldom, of course, that two artists approve of each other's work; if they appear to do so it is probable that one of them is not an artist. The man who shrugged his shoulders no doubt condemned Matisse, but certainly not on the grounds on which the—shall we call them for short—traditionalists condemn him. The traditionalists say that Matisse's drawings and paintings are bad because they are not like Nature. But all who have thought about it know that all drawing, like all painting, is unlike Nature. The problem is only one of judging degrees. How far, then, may an artist go in his departure from Nature, without offending against art? The answer is: As far as he chooses. Art is a language made up of symbols. The number of people who understand the symbols elevates the symbols

into a convention and eventually into a style—but you cannot have a convention understood by one alone.

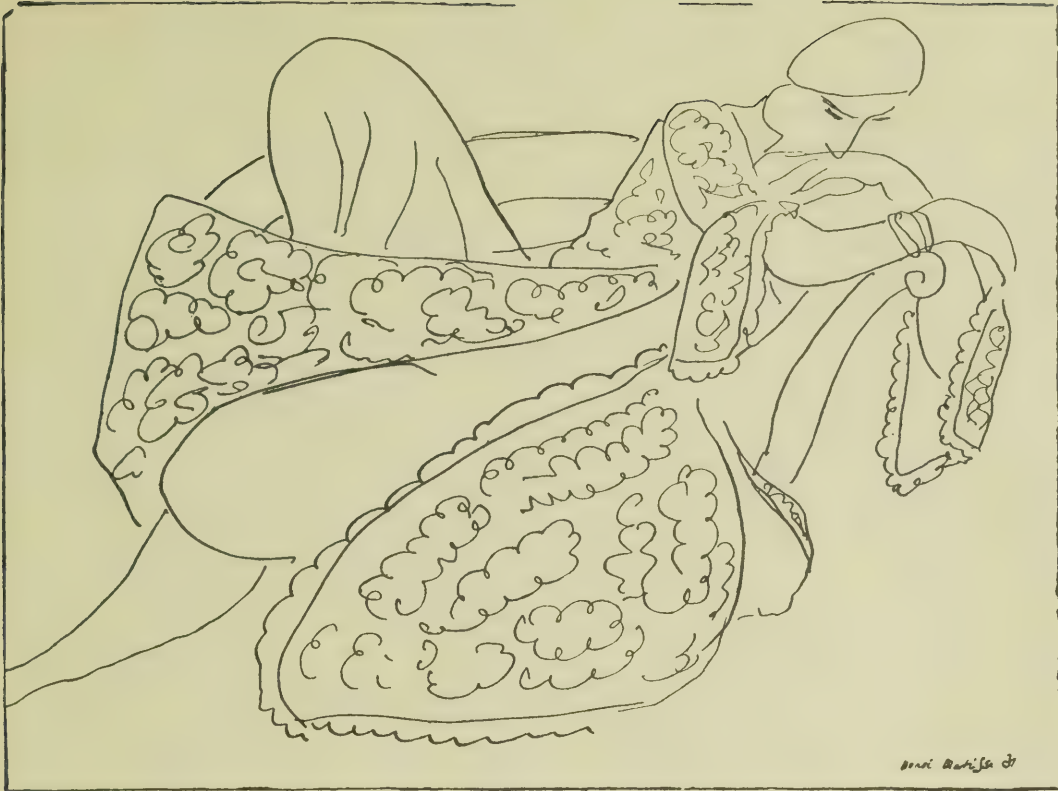
Now, it is commonly assumed that the object of drawing is to delineate, with the utmost accuracy, natural objects such as cows or cupids, waves or washerwomen, gardens or gasworks—cows, washerwomen and gasworks, however, being regarded as less 'artistic.' The underlying idea, nevertheless, is in all cases that you, the spectator, should be induced by art to mistake the drawing for the real thing, and when the thing, say a cupid, never existed at all, the art is judged to be at its highest.

Perhaps a great majority, including even draughtsmen of all kinds, have this truly naïve and childlike conception. The Renaissance movement—it still twitches *in extremis*—strove in this sense for accuracy, for ever greater realism, more finish, more perfection.

Then, almost suddenly something, or rather a great many unforeseen things, happened in Europe. Steam transport, photography, Chinese paintings, Japanese woodcuts, Benin bronzes, Maya sculpture and so forth and so on. The astonished world, the stunned artists, or some of the more intelligent ones at least, began to realize that Greeks and Romans spoke only two of many dead dialects in the great language-family of Art.

To put it in Matisse's own words, quoted from the interesting interview with him in 'L'Intransigeant' of June 16th, 1931: 'L'Esthétique impressionniste nous paraissait insuffisante ainsi que la technique du Louvre et nous voulûmes aller directement à nos nécessités d'expression. L'Artiste encombré de toutes les techniques passées et présentes se demandait: "Qu'est ce que je veux?"'

Note the 'insuffisante.' The more complicated techniques of tradition, the objective æsthetic of impressionism are felt to be insufficient by Matisse and others of the 'Fauves,'





## Joseph Wright, A.R.A.

precisely because they did not enable the artist to make his own æsthetic and technique subservient to that which he had to say.

The outstanding achievement of *Modern Art* is that it has extended the means of expression and made them subservient to the artist's aims.

The greatest significance of Matisse as a draughtsman is the variety of his line and the force with which he can make it express what he wishes.

Take only the human form, as rendered by him, for an example: Some drawings, the heads notably, express character or mood; others the anatomical aspect of his model; others stress the solidity of her form with full light and shade, others again stress the play of the planes as delimited by their edges, *i.e.*, their contour rhythm. Discovering that the drawn lines of this contour rhythm tend to make a pattern, Matisse goes on to stress the pattern aspect of the human figure and to subordinate it to its environment, to furniture, fabrics and wallpapers—all in the interest of a vivacious pattern-making. In parenthesis we must note that French artists, Samson-like, manage to extract from the questionable 'carcase' of their national and natural preferences the honey of æsthetic achievement with baffling skill. I refer in this case particularly to the way in which Matisse has time and again incorporated the most atrocious patterns of

French wallpapers in some of his most attractive and delightful pictures.

For any but theoretical purposes judgment in æsthetic matters is still purely personal, and I can, therefore, sum up what is only my opinion of the significance of Matisse's art in the following words.

Matisse is naturally attracted to the superficial qualities of Art; to its rhythm and its colour. Although he has attempted the delineation of character and mood in some of his portrait paintings and drawings, one feels it as a strain. The purely intellectual excursions into abstract art, after the manner of Picasso, which he has also essayed are not in his line; but give him the joyous rhythm of a human figure in its natural environment and he will reproduce it or rather emphasize it with infectious enthusiasm.

At least one of the chosen illustrations here shows he *can* draw as accurately as any Academician; the others show he can draw with much more variety, and he becomes a significant artist in those of his works which are done with the barest but most rhythmically calligraphic line.

Within his compass he is one of the most important modern artists, because he has helped to bring back into European art the consciousness that Art is something more and something other than imitation.

## JOSEPH WRIGHT, A.R.A.

(WRIGHT OF DERBY)

1734—1797

By ROY MORRIS

IN the histories of 18th-century painting Joseph Wright rarely receives more than a passing reference, and it is common to find even among painters, and people who know about painting and pictures, an almost total ignorance regarding him; of the few who know his name, fewer still know his pictures.

Yet Wright in his day was a portrait painter of repute; was held second only to Wilson as a landscapist, and was the inventor of an unusual type of *genre* picture. He was a member of the Society of Artists and an important exhibitor in that Society; was

elected an A.R.A., and had sufficient confidence in his professional standing to refuse the full diploma of the Academy and to hold one of the earliest recorded one-man shows.

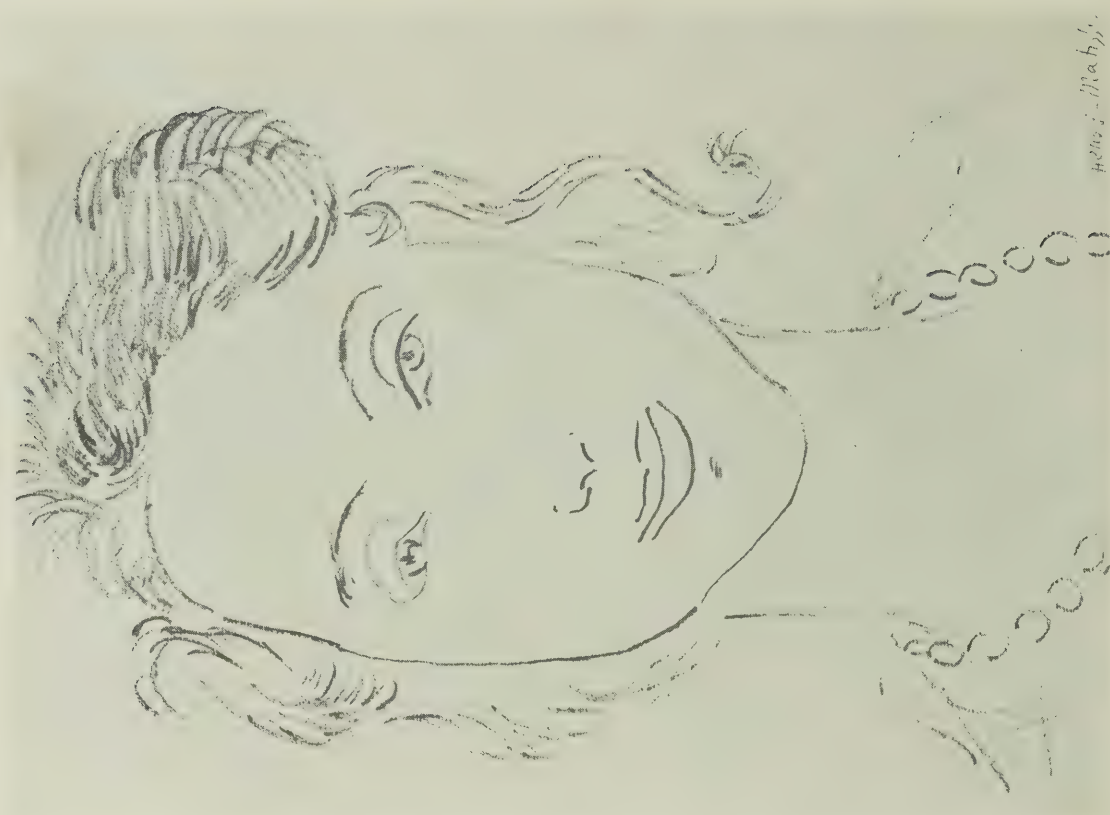
It is probable that the circumstance which has acted most against the spread of Wright's reputation has been the concentration of his best works in the gallery of his native town and the retention of his best portraits by the families for whose ancestors they were painted. It is in fact somewhat surprising, considering how infrequently his works come into the market, that he has not reached, on







HENRI-MATISSE (1922)



HENRI-MATISSE



JOSEPH WRIGHT, A.R.A. *Hugh Wood of Swanwick and his wife Sarah*







JOSEPH WRIGHT, A.R.A. *The Orrery*

(By permission of the Derby Art Gallery)



JOSEPH WRIGHT, A.R.A. *Landscape with a Rainbow*

(By permission of the Derby Art Gallery)





JOSEPH WRIGHT, A.R.A. *The Alchemist*

(By permission of the Derby Art Gallery)

the ground of rarity alone, the apotheosis at auction which has been attained or appears imminent in the cases of so many among his contemporaries.

That he became a painter in the teeth of parental opposition is a condition so common as to be almost the norm for every self-respecting artist. Born at Derby on September 3rd, 1734, he was the third son of John Wright, an attorney and Town Clerk of the borough from 1756 to 1765; a lawyer of such probity as to earn the nickname of 'Equity' Wright. Destined to follow his father's profession, Joseph at an early age gave evidence that his bent was in another direction. His early artistic efforts followed the usual channels—he copied all the available prints and, when these were exhausted, memorized and drew the signboards of the local inns. Family opposition does not appear to have been very determined or prolonged, for when Joseph was seventeen years old his father, who cannot have been a rich man, apprenticed him to the most fashionable portrait painter of the day, Hudson.

With Hudson, Wright spent two years copying drawings, working from the plaster cast, and possibly on occasions painting backgrounds and accessories in Hudson's portraits. There appears no record in his letters that he attended any of the little academies or schools which at that time offered facilities for drawing from the life. At the end of 1753 Wright was back in Derby and commenced practice as a portrait painter, with, apparently, some success.

He appears to have been dissatisfied with his own efforts, for in 1756 he returned to Hudson for a further period of training, remaining this time for some fifteen months.

On his return to Derby from this second apprenticeship, all appears to have run smoothly, for a few years at least. Aided, no doubt, by his family connections he does not appear to have lacked employment during what are, commonly, the most difficult years of a painter's life: he had a knack of capturing an excellent likeness, and though in no way startling his portraits were soundly and conscientiously executed.

But a provincial town of the size of Derby could hardly keep a portrait painter in constant practice. Wright soon found it advisable to extend his range of subjects and to widen his field. His MS. books record in 1760 what

must have been a somewhat extended tour, with some seventy-four portraits painted in Newark, Lincoln, Boston, Retford, Doncaster, Thorn and Eckington, and another list of sitters for the same year gives sixty-five items painted apparently at Derby: one hundred and thirty-nine sitters in a year seems pretty good going for a provincial painter, and Wright is said *not* to have been a rapid worker.

In 1765 Wright began to exhibit with the newly formed Society of Artists the studies of artificial light effects upon which his fame largely rests. It is improbable considering its importance that the picture of this year, *Three persons viewing the Gladiator by candlelight*, can have been quite without predecessors, but it is the first of this kind that can be dated with certainty. It was followed in 1766 by *The Orrery*, and in 1768 by *The Air Pump*, perhaps Wright's masterpiece.

The success of these pictures was immediate and striking. Farington records the opinion of West that Wright in such subjects was without rival.

In 1768 the Royal Academy was founded. Wright was then at the zenith of his powers, and although painters of inferior calibre were included no diploma was offered to him.

In the light of subsequent events it seems curious that Wright, instead of resenting this omission, *actually entered himself as a student*. It is probable that this step was taken more from a feeling of being 'out of the movement' and a desire to extend his acquaintance among artists than from any feeling of inferiority or incompetence.

In 1769 he was in Liverpool, where among some twenty-four other works he painted the portrait of *Mrs. Ashton* now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, a mature and powerful work which displays no lack of confidence or competence. The same gallery also possesses his portrait of its founder, Viscount Fitzwilliam.

That Wright was avid for anything which might widen his outlook and improve his work is indicated by the fact that in 1773 he abandoned his practice—a very serious step for a portrait painter developing reputation and *clientèle*—and undertook a visit to Italy which lasted nearly two years. Here, like Reynolds, he appears to have been impressed by the



works of Michelangelo; a very considerable portion of his time was spent in making large drawings in the Sistine Chapel, where, lying on his back in order to facilitate his work, he is said to have contracted an ailment which afflicted him for the rest of his life.

Wright's studies in Italy cannot be said to have resulted, as in the case of Reynolds, in any marked change or improvement of style; the most apparent results seem to have been an increased interest in landscape painting and the discovery of a fresh variant of the lighting effects which had attracted notice in England. He had at Naples witnessed an eruption of Vesuvius, a subject much to his taste, which impressed him so profoundly that he painted eighteen variants of the eruption alone, besides numerous pictures in which conflagrations are combined with moonlight; effects which though to-day they leave us unmoved were in his own time regarded as highly romantic and impressive. One of the earlier paintings of the eruption, and another picture of a Forge, were purchased by the Empress Catharine of Russia in 1775, anticipating by ten years the Empress's commission to Reynolds.

On his return to England in 1775, Wright settled in Bath. Gainsborough had left the city in the previous year. Here he met with no success. Sitters and commissions did not come to him, a fact which he attributed to the jealousy of fellow artists who spread the report that 'I paint fire-pieces admirably but they never heard of my painting portraits.' 'I have heard,' he also writes, 'that want of business was the reason of Gainsborough leaving Bath.'

His reputation as a firelight painter was natural enough; his contributions to the Society of Artists had been mainly pictures of that type, and his reputation as a portrait painter was largely confined to his own locality. In 1777 he returned to his native town, where he remained for the rest of his life.

In 1776 Wright, considering himself aggrieved by having, through slackness of management, lost the sale of a picture he exhibited in that year at the Society of Artists, resolved that he would never again exhibit there. In 1778, the year following his return to Derby, he exhibited for the first time at the Academy; why he had previously held aloof

from the exhibitions is a problem now unanswerable. Farington's diary gives an opinion that Wright had been prejudiced against the Academy by Hayley and Romney. The facts, I think, hardly bear that out: prior to his departure for Italy Wright had entered himself as a student at the Royal Academy; within two years after his return he began to exhibit there, and (plainly showing that he desired membership) was in 1781 elected an Associate. In 1783 he was a candidate for full membership. The Academy, however, on this occasion elected Edmund Garvey, a much inferior painter. Now as Garvey had been an Associate for some thirteen years, and as Academic promotions are made, one supposes, as much on seniority as on merit, he was surely due for promotion, and Wright, a comparatively new Associate, had nothing very much to grumble about. However, Wright's chagrin was considerable, and curiously enough found much support.

The extraordinary feature of the affair is that the Academy, either afraid of popular outcry or conscious of having committed an injustice, elected Wright a full member, *in spite of the fact that no vacancy then existed*, and despatched their secretary, Newton, to Derby to offer Wright the full diploma, 'which,' says Anthony Pasquin, 'was rejected with the most evident marks of contempt, and the secretary kicked as a recompense for his presumption!' One regrets to admit the improbability of such a delicious story. The facts are far from clear; the whole affair is an instance of the petty squabbings and jealousies which disfigured the infancy of our august Academy: this much is, I think, certain, that the Academy elected Wright and that Wright refused the election.

In 1785 Wright, having no place of exhibition, held a one-man show at Robins's Rooms, Covent Garden, exhibiting twenty-five pictures, some of which had been previously shown. The success or failure of this exhibition is not recorded. Wright does not appear to have repeated the venture.

In 1788 and the two following years Wright again exhibited at the Academy, having apparently patched up his quarrel, but his letters of this period complain bitterly of the scurvy treatment his pictures received at the hands of the hanging committee. 'Partiality pervades

*Joseph Wright, A.R.A.*

the whole,' he writes. 'Who it is that misconducts this matter I know not, but I have heard that Farington has much sway in the Academy.' Between 1790 and 1794 he did not exhibit there, and was represented for the last time in the latter year.

As far as his professional status was concerned Wright was undoubtedly a very prickly person. He seems to have been one of those nervously irritable people who without in the least intending to be quarrelsome find themselves continually embroiled in petty squabbles.

He was a hypochondriac and probably brooded over his wrongs, reducing himself to such a state of nervous prostration that work was impossible to him for long periods. 'I have heard nothing,' he writes, 'but humiliating observations on my pictures which have tended much to the inactivity of my pencil for some time past. What a mere machine I am become, depressed and rendered useless by a little censure, and put into motion again by a little flattery, I really believe that my enemies might easily persuade me that I have no pretensions to paint. What a thing have these weak nerves made of me.'

Yet in writing to Boydell, for whose Shakespeare Gallery he painted two pictures (one an enormous canvas 12 feet by 8½ feet), he has no hesitation in asserting himself to be in the same class as Sir Joshua, West, and Romney, and in accusing Boydell of unfair dealing in that he (Wright) had been paid less than Sir Joshua and West. Boydell's reply is interesting, 'I never presumed to class the painters . . . at the same time I am free to confess that had I ever presumed to class the historical painters of this country perhaps Mr. Wright's name would not have stood exactly where he has been pleased to place it himself. *In the*

*line of landscape, I confess, it would have been a different consideration.'*

Then there is the story of the Bishop of Derry, who, having bespoken a large picture of Vesuvius and apparently wishing either to get out of his bargain or to reduce the price, '. . . thus preached to the artist his pride had employed:

'Indeed Mr. Wright you mistake or neglect  
The true tint of fire and its proper effect.  
I wonder you think of employing your hand  
On a branch of the art that you don't understand.  
Hold, meanness and pride, tho' you're mantled in lawn  
Ye shall meet due contempt and your masque be  
withdrawn.

You never shall wound unrepaid with disgrace  
A genius so modest with insult so base.  
You black diletante! hence learn to your shame  
No mortal can give more expression to flame.  
If on flashes more brilliant your eyes wish to dwell  
Your Lordship must go for your pictures to —'

The verse is Hayley's and ends:

'And the devil who often creates himself mirth  
By caricaturing odd beings from earth  
Would find proper hints for his pencil to sketch  
In a mitre bestowed on so sordid a wretch.'

Wright indignantly refused, it is hoped with more circumspection, to allow the Bishop to have the picture, nor would he ever sell it.

The late Robert Ross used to say, I believe, that most minor artists are very nice men. Where his artistic status was not concerned Wright appears to have been a most charming and lovable fellow, an affectionate husband and an indulgent father. His friendships are in a way an index to his character: Wilson, praised by painters and passed over by patrons; Romney, like Wright himself, a recluse; Mortimer, who also never attained full Academic rank. It has been said, too, that all his patrons became his friends.



# MANNERLY ADVERTISING

By W. G. RAFFÉ

WHEN one man wishes to sell something to another it would seem that the best method of achieving this purpose would be to attract attention, arouse interest, and gain sympathy for the message and the object. Conversely, the worst method would be to bawl at the person addressed, to credit him with neither sensitiveness nor intelligence, to bully him through graphic line and form till his tortured eye is seized with a blindness that extends itself in self-defence to all advertising. Of the principal advertising forms, in the press, on the hoardings, and in other outdoor publicity, none is exempt from a large proportion of inept, ill-devised, thoughtless and inefficient work; so that a witty and urbane approach not only secures attention by its own pleasantness but also entangles those minds which more and more resent the barbarous assaults which crude advertising so often attempts upon them.

Our pleasure is the greater when we find not merely an occasional decent advertisement for some necessary commodity, but a great firm whose deliberate policy is to refrain from nauseating crudity, in a series of appeals for our suffrage made with such skill that no breach of good manners is committed. That good artists should be employed to carry out the creative side, and good writers charged with the task of abetting the witty originators of advertising ideas, is an obvious consummation of this policy; and finally the technical aid of good printers—who are more numerous in Great Britain than might be supposed from the use that is made of them—is a natural corollary. The New Burlington Gallery exhibition of 'Shell' designs for advertising was further proof of my reiterated theory that good design, thoughtful design, is the kind that serves best. It is pleasant, too, to record the fact that British artists—though one or two other nationalities were represented—can provide every style and method that may be necessary. The London and North Eastern

Railway is the only firm, besides the 'Shell' organization, which has attempted to fill an exhibition solely with its own pictorial advertisements.

Some sixty exhibits, each, in certain sections, comprising six, ten or twelve drawings, showed a high average excellence, whether in black-and-white pen or brush work, in poster colour or in direct drawing on the lithographic stone. The artists included H. S. Williamson, Andrew Johnson, Tom Purvis, Jean d'Ylen, McKnight Kauffer, and others whose work appears less often on the hoardings.

Part of the interest of posters arises from novelty, in content, wording or formal and chromatic quality. Good advertising begins to operate when a blend of these ingredients can be allied closely with the commodity advertised, and a real pictorial or pattern interest can be combined with a sense of the observer's probable use for the proffered object. In Edna Clarke Hall's lithograph *Lavenham* these functions are fulfilled. Without the banality of full photographic realism, her village has a vital quality that must commend itself far more forcefully to the motorist who passes through, or halts, perchance, at 'The Red Lion.' Another landscape, with less realism of volume though filled with suggestions of vibrant atmosphere, is Vanessa Bell's *Alfriston*, in which the technique of an enlarged *pointillisme* first challenges and then engages the attention.

In Kauffer's work and in Purvis's could be observed a change of style, leaving 'flat colour' schemes for more fully modelled designs. A feature of note was the amusing series of pen drawings by Rex Whistler, among which was *The Academy*, used at topical moments in press advertising. Altogether this exhibition was welcome as a cheerful gesture in a phase of depression, and for its virile demonstration of some lively aspects of modern graphic art intelligently used in advertising.



JOSEPH WRIGHT, A.R.A. *Cascades of Tivoli*  
*Landscape Drawing*





VANESSA BELL *Alfriston* (above) EDNA CLARKE HALL *Lavenham* (below)





MARGARET BARKER *Lithograph*



FREDERICK PORTER *Barges on the Thames* (Water-colour)





F. H. FLAHERTY *South Sea Islanders*



F. H. FLAHERTY *South Sea Islanders*





F. H. FLAHERTY *South Sea Islander*

# THE CINEMA

*Flaherty—Naturalism—and the Problem of English Cinema*

By JOHN GRIERSON

A HAPPY fortune has at last brought Mr. Robert Flaherty to England. Flaherty was the director of *Nanook and Moana*, the originator of *White Shadows of the South Seas*, the co-director, with Murnau, of *Tabu*. He was the initiator of the naturalist tradition in cinema, and is still the high-priest of the spontaneities. The happy fortune lies in the fact that of all distinguished foreign directors he is the one whose sympathies are most nearly English. Technically, he is American, but the major part of his life has been spent exploring or filming within the British Empire.

This long association, together with his explorer's hatred of Hollywood artificialities, makes him the one director whose cinematic persuasion is most likely to benefit our present England. He comes to London for the first time with an eye for its authority in the world, which adds fantasy to the most familiar. He has seen Esquimaux travel a thousand miles to buy an English blanket which would last them a lifetime, when the shoddy article of more recent commercial tradition was at their igloo doors. He has eaten out an Arctic winter on the superior construction of English bully-beef tins, which refused to rust with foreign competitors. He has blessed the name of England ten thousand miles away for the one glue in the world which the tropics could not melt.

I knew Flaherty in New York, and he was the only man I knew there whom Babel did not enthrall. This seemed to me a most perverse feat of the mind at the time, but in these later days I would more sensibly describe it as a feat of most necessary simplicity. It is only now apparent how the blazonry of American ballyhoo was selling a generation into slavery. Flaherty used to say: 'They are a tribe of sharks preying on the weakness of their neighbours. This is their way of being ferocious.' He contrasted the public decency of Polynesians. Economics, of which he professes nothing, have most strangely found him right. I know not how many millions the American people will have to pay their

irresponsible exploiters when prosperity comes again; for goods consumed.

Now in London I find Flaherty's eye for things as fascinating as before. He tells me that wholesomeness went out of American humour when Mark Twain died, and that behind all the flashing wit of American cross-talk is an essential unkindliness. He tells me that England is dirty and scrambled, that its humour is simple, but that this original human wholesomeness remains to it. He tells me that English faces retain an individuality which stands up to the buildings as American faces cannot. He contrasts the manicured landscape of the Continent with the informality and intimacy of the Chilterns. He praises, most unfashionably, craftsmanship.

These hints and emphases are very close to the problem we have to solve in our English cinema, for we are more than ever in search of the national certainties we are to proclaim. We have not yet evolved a *style*. We imitate Hollywood, and occasionally we imitate Neubabelsburg and Moscow. There is some original lack of affection for our own English worth, a lack of knowledge of it, a lack of bravery in it which prevents our bringing beauty, and convincing beauty, out of the films we make.

It is, I know only too well, difficult to be sure of one's attitudes in a decade like this. Can we heroicize our men when we know them to be exploited? Can we romanticize our industrial scene when we know that our men work brutally and starve ignobly in it? Can we praise it—and in art there must be praise—when the most blatant fact of our time is the bankruptcy of our national management? Our confidence is sapped, our beliefs are troubled, our eye for beauty is most plainly disturbed: and the more so in cinema than in any other art. For we have to build on the actual. Our capital comes from those whose only interest is in the actual. The medium itself insists on the actual. There we must build or be damned.

Flaherty's most considerable contribution to



this problem is, as always, his insistence on the beauty of the natural. It is not everything, for it does not in the last resort isolate and define the purposes which must, consciously or unconsciously, inform our craftsmanship. But it does ensure that the raw material from which we work is the raw material most proper to the screen. The camera-eye is in effect a magical instrument. It can see a thousand things in a thousand places at different times, and the cunning cutter can string them together for a review of the world. Or he can piece them together—a more difficult task—for a review of a subject or situation more intricate and more intimate than any mortal eye can hope to match. But its magic is even more than this. It lies also in the manner of its observation, in the strange innocence with which, in a mind-tangled world, it sees things for what they are. This is not simply to say that the camera, on its single observations, is free from the trammels of the subjective, for it is patent that it will not follow the director in his enthusiasms any more than it will follow him in the wide-angled vision of his eyes. The magical fact of the camera is that it picks out what the director does not see at all, that it gives emphasis where he did not think emphasis existed.

The camera is in a measure both the discoverer of an unknown world and the re-discoverer of a lost one. There are, as everyone knows, strange moments of beauty that leap out of most ordinary news reels. It may be some accidental pose of character or some spontaneous gesture which radiates simply because it is spontaneous. It may be some high angle of a ship, or a crane, or a chimney stack, or a statue, adding some element of the heroic by a new-found emphasis. It may be some mere fore-shortening of a bollard and a rope that ties a ship to a quay in spirit as well as in fact. It may be the flap of a hatch cover which translates a gale. It may be the bright revelation of rhythms that time has worn smooth: the hand movement of a potter, the wrist movement of a native priest, or the muscle play of a dancer or a boxer or a runner. All of them seem to achieve a special virtue in the oblong of the screen.

So much Flaherty has taught us all. If we add to it such instruction as we have taken from Griffith and the Russians, of how to mass

movement and create suspense, of how to keep an eye open for attendant circumstance and sub-conscious effect, we have in sum a most formidable equipment as craftsmen. But the major problem remains, the problem I have mentioned, the problem the critics do not worry their heads over, though creators must: what final honours and final dishonours we shall reveal in this English life of ours: what heroism we shall set against what villainy. The field of cinema is not only a field for creators but for prophets.

The method followed by Flaherty in his own film-making might give us a most valuable lead. He took a year to make his study of the Esquimaux, and this after ten years' exploration in the Esquimaux country of Labrador and Baffin Land. He took two years to make his study of Samoan life, and only now, after three more years in the South Seas, feels he could do justice to it. He soaked himself in his material, lived with it to the point of intimacy and beyond that to the point of belief, before he gave it form. This is a long method, and may be an expensive one; and it is altogether alien in a cinema world which insists on forcing a pre-conceived shape (one of half-a-dozen rubber stamped dramatic shapes) on all material together. Its chief claim to our regard, however, is that it is necessary, and particularly necessary in England. We know our England glibly as an industrial country, as a beautiful country of this epic quality and that; we know it by rote as a maker of Empire and as a manipulator of world-wide services. But we do not know it in our everyday observation as such. Our literature is divorced from the actual: it is written as often as not in the South of France. Our culture is divorced from the actual: it is practised almost exclusively in the rarified atmosphere of country colleges and country retreats. Our gentlemen explore the native haunts and investigate the native customs of Tanganyika and Timbuctoo, but do not travel dangerously into the jungles of Middlesbrough and the Clyde. Their hunger for English reality is satisfied briefly and sentimentally over a country hedge.

We might make an English cinema, as we might make English art again, if we could only send our creators back to fact. Not only to the old fact of the countryside which our poets

## The Cinema

have already honoured, but to the new fact of industry and commerce and plenty and poverty which no poet has honoured at all. Every week I hear men ask for films of industry. They want it praised and proclaimed to the world, and I would like to see their money used and their purposes fulfilled. But what advice can I give them? We can produce them the usual slick rubbish, some slicker, some less slick; but who of us knows an industry well enough to bring it alive for what it is? And what statescraft is willing to send a creator into an industry, so to know it: for a year, for two years perhaps, for the length of a hundred thousand feet of film and possibly more. Our business men expect art without the length of art: they expect a work of art to schedule, as the housewife expects her daily groceries. They expect it of a new medium. They expect it from raw material which they in their own hearts despise.

Flaherty, as an individual artist, cannot answer the whole problem. He knows his primitives and will do a job for them out of the strength of his affection. He could do a job for English craftsmanship and for the tradition of quality in English work, and for the native solidity in English institutions, and English criticism and character; but he is of a persuasion that does not easily come to grips with the more modern factors of civilization. In his heart he prefers a sailing barge to a snub-nosed funnel-after, and a scythe to a mechanical reaper. He will say that there is well-being associated with the first and none with the second, and in a manner he is right: right in his emphasis on well-being. But how otherwise than by coming to industry, even as it is, and forcing beauty from it, and bringing people to see beauty in it, can one, in turn, inspire man to create and find well-being. For this surely is the secret of our particular well-being, that men must accept the environment in which they live, with its smoke and its steel and its mechanical aids, even with its rain. It may not be so easily pleasant as the halcyon environment of Tahiti, but this is beside the point.

I think in this other matter one may turn to the Russians for guidance rather than to Flaherty. Their problem, of course, is different from ours. The industrial backwardness of

the country, the illiteracy of their people, and the special factors of Russian psychology make for a rhetoric in their cinema which we cannot blindly imitate. Apart from this national difference, which is in effect their *style*, there is an ardour of experiment in their treatment of industrial and social material. They have built up rhythms from their machinery; they have made their work exciting and noble. They have made society on the move the subject-matter of art. Their sense of rhythm is not necessarily our sense of rhythm. Their sense of nobility and sense of social direction need not be identical with ours. The essential point, however, is that they have built up this rhythm and nobility and purpose of theirs by facing up to the new material. They have done it out of the necessity of their social situation. No one will say that our own necessity is less than theirs.

If this notice seems to detach itself from the plain cinema fare of the quarter, I have to record that save for the Russian films—*Earth* by Dovshenko, *Turk-Sib* by Turin, *St. Petersburg* by Pudowkin—which the Oxford Street Academy has brought back into circulation, the plain fare of the quarter has been very plain indeed. One very bright moment there was in a private theatre in Wardour Street when a German short revealed the mysteries of Rumanian lumber-men. There is a braking system on the Rumanian hills which stops logs and turns them and sends them slithering on their way again. The whole movement is so unique and so beautiful that I ask you to look for this film. It will appear obscurely as *Turbulent Timbers*, the story of a Rumanian lumber camp. On the other hand, Ruttman's *Fifteen Minutes in Germany*, of which one expected much, was a great disappointment. Whether someone has destroyed it in the passage between Ruttman and ourselves, I cannot say. It is not good. *The Passion of Joan of Arc* is the only dramatic effort which detaches itself from the wilderness of feature films. It also appeared at the Academy. But *Joan of Arc*, of course, is, like the Russians, a classic we have known before. I am afraid we are in the dog days. The masterpieces, if anywhere, are on Hollywood shelves awaiting the day when the hikers are driven into the cinemas again.



## A CHRONICLE OF EXHIBITIONS

WHILE the Royal Academy ran on into the summer, the authorities at the South Kensington Museum held a vast exhibition of posters. They began at the beginning, with Fred Walker, Pryde and Nicholson, and carried on down to the present day, drawing from every country of importance. The result was impressive and stimulating, and made the Academy itself by comparison seem aimless and almost stagnant, like a remote pond full of water-lilies. Yet Academicians had done many of these posters, and it was impossible to tell theirs from the rest.

To the prejudiced English eye, the Underground and McKnight Kauffer still lead the world. Our own colours seem better, and we seem to have gone further in pure abstraction without loss of meaning. There were the familiar names—Gregory Brown, Horace Taylor, Herrick, Williamson, and Charles Paine; but there were also names which had been made elsewhere—Sheringham, Nevinston, Ethelbert White, and others: Mansbridge and George Bissill. What we should like is an exhibition of some works by these latter painters, side by side with their posters.

France had the *Aristide Bruant* of Toulouse-Lautrec, Germany the *Prisoner of War Appeal* by Ludwig Hohlwein, Russia the *Chauve-Souris* of Soudeikine. The list would be endless, for all these works were competent; they had been produced for enlightened firms, and had afterwards been passed by the Museum's Selection Committee.

Yet posters have certain drawbacks. The world of the designer is 'edited,' and his outlook narrowed to special pleading: he has to gild things, show only their best side, and remain silent about aspects which an ordinary person would have fixed upon. At first this was hardly noticeable, and the *Don Quixote* of the Beggarstaff Brothers and the *Woman in White* of Fred Walker reached a nobility never since rivalled. But they were not 'good

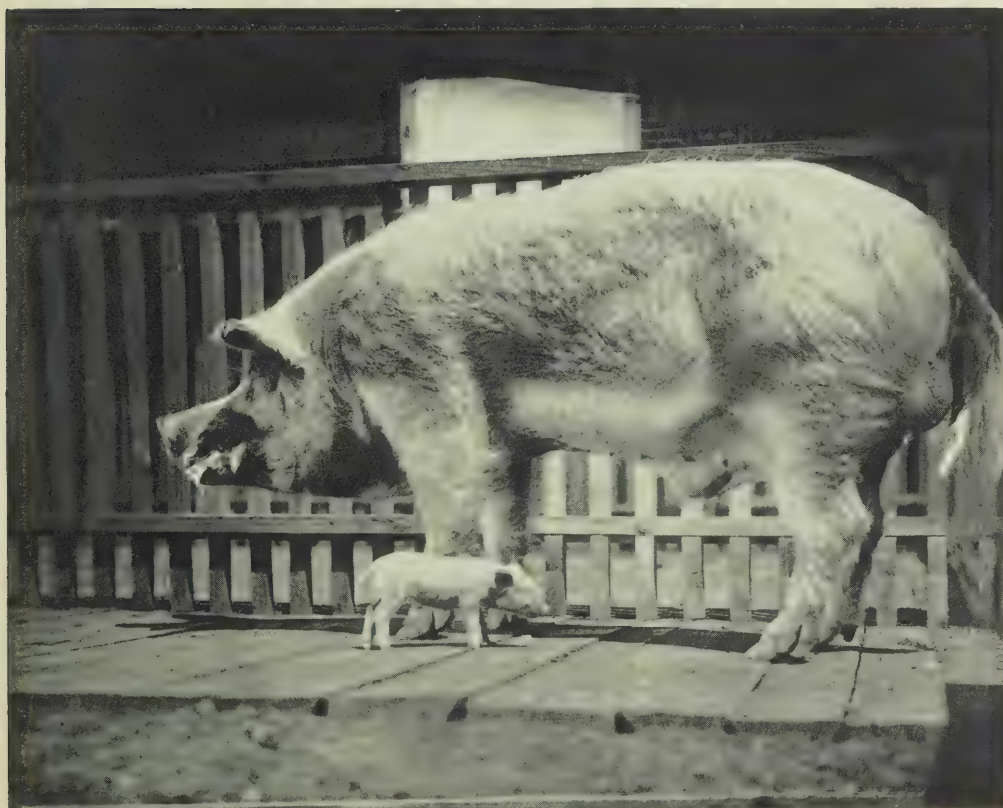
salesmanship.' Don Quixote was the image of the gentleman as an Irish writer has defined him: 'Somebody who doesn't know how to get on.' The *Woman in White* was a Pre-raphaelite figure escaping, horrified, through a doorway into a starlit night, and—as it appeared—into a less cruel world. Of what use were these to commerce? Or even to the theatre? The designer of posters must know how to get on: and the result in extreme cases may be this sort of thing, chosen at random from an American advertisement:

From the garden valleys of San Joaquin and Sacramento, fenced by the snowy Sierras and coast range mountains, where the boundless vineyards bear this fruit in perfection. Here, ripe to bursting with their goodness, the perfect clusters are taken from the vines and placed on trays to dry. And here the golden Californian sunshine turns the juicy, tender-skinned grapes, with all their full, rich flavour, into S— Raisins.

Nearer home than America we have the seaside poster, with a hard blue sky, and people in the foreground sunburnt to a degree which is insulting to those who are not; flashing their white teeth and rejoicing in their sylph-like or gladiatorial figures. Such a world has no room for the Turner who was a painter of storm-scenes, and would have boycotted the Tennyson who wrote:

The sands and yeasty surges mix  
In caves about the dreary bay  
And on thy ribs the limpet sticks  
And in thy heart the scrawl shall play.  
God help me! Save I take my part  
Of danger on the roaring sea. . . .

The Underground posters, however, have escaped this difficulty. They show the country as the Londoner dreams of it; edited, perhaps, to omit elm disease, weasels devouring rabbits, and moneylenders devouring mortgaged farms: but then these are rare subjects for landscape in any case. For realism of this sort there are the Soviet films. Still, it is allowable to compare a poster of a snow scene with a linocut of the same subject. The poster was by



GENERAL LINE

(By permission of Atlas)





F. H. FLAHERTY *The South Seas*



THE END OF ST. PETERSBURG

(By permission of Atlas)

## *A Chronicle of Exhibitions*

Colombi, of *St. Moritz*, and one of the best ever done in Switzerland. It was all sunshine, cloudless sky, powder-snow and prosperity. The lino-cut was by Julia Mavrogordato, at the Redfern Galleries; it showed snow below zero, blizzard lighting, and a small figure with a sledge toiling uphill, dwarfed by the surrounding trees. Free from any necessity to edit, it contained things Colombi was obviously prevented from including.

Yet in the long run posters have proved that one can be abstract, and retain rhythm and good colouring, and still be intelligible to the ordinary English public. A good deal of 'L'Art Vivant' is like the mutterings of a drunken sleep-walker, put forward as prophecy: after seeing it one returns to posters with a sense of relief.

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The lino-cuts at the Redfern Gallery were like a miniature version of the posters; but, for good or ill, the commercial factor was absent, and the choice of subject was free. From being a child's amusement this art grew up three years ago, when the first of these exhibitions took place; but it still keeps an air of youthfulness. Perhaps because it is easy and cheap to do, and the colours though brilliant have a softness which improves on woodcut: perhaps because it is still exploring, and has no great names to weigh it down. At any rate it has an air of high spirits which is natural and not dictated.

The colouring at present is more naïve than the design: these works show decorative power enough to stock ten ordinary exhibitions. There was a tree with two cats on it, by Eileen Mayo, in which not only the cats but the tree itself seemed to be breaking into dance time. The medium precludes copying, and forces a recasting of the subject into simpler shapes: an example is the work of Edith Lawrence, which brings out the linoleum character, and produces patterns which look right, though in oil they would seem too arbitrary. George Nicholson uses rubber and gets effects of strong sunlight like those of his water-colours. But the Mavrogordato series stood alone, in richness and poetic feeling. Some woodcuts by the same artist at the Ward Gallery, in Baker Street, show that her approach was from a woodcut training: hence the use

of elaborate cross-hatching, to suggest solidity. But the result seems proper to linoleum, and an ability to put live horses on to paper and yet keep them part of a general decoration makes these prints very much worth having.

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Continental painting has been represented at Messrs. Tooths' and the Cooling Galleries, and by centenaries of Camille Pissarro at the Leicester Galleries and the Tate.

Messrs. Tooths' was an exhibition of recent or living Frenchmen whose names are made: some Utrillos, a brilliant Riviera splash by Dufy, and two of Derain's portraits. Derain gives the impression of having emerged on the far side of deliberate distortion and come back to within a few millimetres of a plain statement. The result is alive without looking 'queer.'

A show at the Cooling Galleries, of living painters chiefly from the Swiss end of France, contained a Flandrin flowerpiece which had rhythm, a sense of weight, and a tropical colour-scheme; the flowers seen with such a freedom from literary associations of the ordinary kind, that the picture might have been painted by a tiger, to whom flowers or trees would be either good cover, or something to climb up if they were solid enough; but not a matter for sentimental vapourings.

The Pissarros showed how useful an invention Impressionism was, at a time when places like Sydenham began to need special eyesight if a satisfactory picture was to be made out of them. The Millet-like figures raised the question whether Pissarro was at heart a townsman romantic about the country, or a villager who was enchanted by towns. But the happiest of these works were corn-fields and orchards, such as *Matinée d'Automne, Eragny*, at the Tate. Done in 1902, at the end of the painter's life, it showed trees, a sea of grass and a mirage of heat, caught and fixed in a quiet way that should be proof against time.

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English painting was shown at the Goupil, the Redfern and the London Association: Duncan Grant's one-man show, and the memorial exhibition to Mrs. Cheston.

At the Goupil there was one of the Steer water-colours which seem to happen without human agency, putting no strain either on the



## A Chronicle of Exhibitions

painter or on the medium (*Woodland Scene*). Like certain Japanese poems which have only thirty-one syllables, it suggested something a good deal larger. The oil landscapes R. O. Dunlop has been showing this year have settled down into a style, of which *South of France* was a favourable example. He spreads the paint very thick, like butter. But at any rate there are times when the butter seems to have been churned during an immortal hour. David Jones' *Rain on the Terrace* was one of those leg-pulling pictures, which seem to be naïve dabbings, but turn out to be a real seascape with enough wind in it to blow your hat off. Good sailors should enjoy this work. *Shaftesbury*, by Alan Sorrell, was a red-chalk drawing bringing out the structure of a hillside without the help of colour or cross-lighting. It suggested a 'Liber Studiorum' of some English county, not yet explored, or hitherto thought dull.

The Redfern (June Exhibition).—Paul Nash had a series of business-like notes, which might be the sketches of a landscape architect prior to making a model of some stretch of countryside. They were in a dry kind of personal shorthand, with faint washes and severe good drawing. Vera Temple's *Attica Cecropia*, an enlarged study of a moth, was more impressive than a bench of archbishops, and a new idea in portraiture. A formidable creature: if it flew into a candle the candle would go out, and even a lighthouse would be none too safe from it. Weitzel's *Samoan Rhythm* had a vitality and freshness which are rare among decorations of this sort, intended for fabrics.

The London Association (Batsford Gallery).—*Canterbury Bells* by Roger Fry is the best work he has shewn this year, with a pleasant colour and more variety in texture than he usually allows himself.

Duncan Grant, at the Cooling Galleries, produced a thousand-candle-power blaze of artificial Southern daylight. People were seen backing against walls, to discover how far these emphatic oil-paintings would carry. Mr. Grant is a wolf for landscape, he attacks grass and trees with a dazzling vigour and confidence, producing now and then, as in *Farm at Cassis*, something whose colour is unusual and rousing. But when people appear upon his scene some change takes place, and a new set of reactions gets to work: these faces, hands and nude

figures seem at times to be faintly uncomfortable. If only all flesh were grass! But to light up the depths of a London house in winter, try a work of the *Cassis* genus.

Mrs. Cheston has been widely written about, and it is unnecessary to say much more here. In water-colour she was a natural orator, so that when she painted a tree something happened to it, and it became like the tree in the ballad:

It neither grew in syke nor ditch  
Nor yet in ony sheugh;  
But at the gates o' Paradise  
That birk grew fair enough.

But her oils are not to be neglected; with no special technical invention, they are a product of the same true eye for tone and colour, and will 'stand a great deal of looking at.'

★

There are now over forty works on Rodin, including six full-length biographies. He is being buried under a mass of literature. It was pleasant to see the sculpture itself, a collection of bronzes at the Leicester Galleries. The famous pieces were there, and some new to England: *Romeo and Juliet*, for example. M. Grappe of the Rodin Museum had helped with the arrangement: the French Ambassador, speaking briefly at the opening, said he felt as if Rodin were present in the room. Just for a moment after first coming in, one seemed to have passed through the *Porte d'Enfer*, and come into a bronze Purgatory of souls in torment. But a glimpse of the *Age d'Airain*, from a new angle above the crowd, swept away the leavings of ten years hostile criticism which has been gathering round Rodin's name. Mr. Bernard Shaw wrote that an introduction to the catalogue would be an impertinence: it seems right to follow his example and say no more, instead of adding to the forty treatises and the six biographies.

★

The Zurbaran still life and the Velazquez portrait of Góngora, reproduced in this number, are from a collection of Spanish old masters at the Tomas Harris Galleries in Bruton Street. There were four Zurbarans, a good El Greco, and works by del Mazo, Goya and others. They were seen under most favourable conditions: not under glass, and

## Stage Design in the Russian Ballet

against a hanging of dark red velvet from Tarazona Cathedral.

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At the Royal College of Art Exhibition, Thomas Clack and Evelyn Dunbar showed their right to the scholarship and prize awarded them. The outstanding thing was the lead given by Professor Newton's architectural department, with the co-operative designs for two towns, in which the houses were shared out among students and the result rendered lightly and brilliantly as a piece of team-work. Of the crafts some were so good that it seems reasonable to hope that the same idea may be extended; and a room, or the model of a room, carried out on the same collective principle, with the rugs, hangings and so forth allotted to various students, but forming a single decorative scheme. It is difficult to design a rug *in vacuo*, for no definite position, as anybody knows who has tried it. Students who

have discovered one another's capacity for team-work are more likely to be a success when it comes to working for a firm.

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The following are some works which stood out above the rest this quarter, without happening to provide any particular point for discussion:

LONDON ASSOCIATION (COOLING GALLERIES): H. E. du Plessis, *Belsize Crescent, Hampstead*. Morland Lewis, *The Green Park* and *The Serpentine*. Keith Baynes, *Wimbledon Common*. Frederick Porter, water-colours (see reproduction of one in this number). NATIONAL SOCIETY: Alfred Thornton, *June* and *November* (oil). C. S. Cheston, *The Docks, Dover*, and *Autumn Day, Ludlow* (water-colour). George Whitelaw, *Rain in the Mews* (etching). ABDY GALLERY: Boldini, *Tête de femme, chapeau à plume* (red and black chalk).

## STAGE DESIGN IN THE RUSSIAN BALLET

By W. G. RAFFÉ

NO ARTIST will readily admit that a complete appreciation of a ballet can be written by a musical critic. Though newspaper editors usually send a critic of music to perform this task, his diversion from concert or opera produces criticism which more often than not ignores notable contributions from the stage designer, in his three-fold work for scenery, costume and lighting; unless some startling innovation such as 'Hamlet in Modern Dress,' or a dancer without any dress, demands a paragraph. Under such a master impresario as Serge Diaghileff the *décor* always demanded but seldom received as adequate notice as his composers for their music or the dancers for their work. In a complete ballet on a well-equipped modern stage we cannot accept *décor* merely as a frame, as a setting for a dance designed to complement music in a theme of motion. Diaghileff, perceiving the immense importance of the graphic

artist, sought out many who seemed to him to possess the required powers of design—a grasp of colour values not only in paint but in light, a comprehension of volume not merely static but in exhilarating movement. The story of their achievements has been well recorded (though not completely) in W. A. Propert's 'The Russian Ballet, 1921-29.' Such records as this and the same author's previous volume are valuable, since little remains of the ballets but drawings and photographs, some Press cuttings—and memories. To have spanned the vast range of Russian music from Glinka to Prokofieff, with a balancing catholicity of taste which could admire and use *décor* from Slavonic peasant art or the most sophisticated modern Parisian, is an achievement hardly surpassed by the Medici. Diaghileff's momentum, obviously slackened in the Lyceum season of 1931, had yet accomplished much in directions far from the theatre, slight though



its impact has been on the English stage; and it may eventually result in a ballet that is not an imitation but typically English. The Camargo Society's performance of 'Job' as a ballet was definitely English, inspired more by the miracle play than by classical or Russian dancing, while Mrs. Raverat's *décor* was admittedly transcribed from Blake. An impressive result was produced. It is certain that a new School of English ballet can be established, provided that it has something to express.

In Russian *décor* generally may be seen a distinct difference in the handling of interior designs, and even exteriors where buildings are the chief elements, as against those in which landscape is dominant. The artists apparently find it more difficult to subdue natural features to a full degree of decorative handling than when they are designing a stage set based on human handiwork. In 'Rousslan and Ludmila' the fairy landscape of the last scene is far more successful than that produced for 'El Amor Brujo,' excellent though Koukouchkine's work is for de Falla's ballet. Bilinsky's handling of 'Rousslan' was exceedingly good throughout, except in small particulars like the out-of-scale plant form. The permanent Zodiacal back-cloth was an inspiration that succeeded in uniting different scenes and placing them above material earth; for even 'Svietozar's Palace at Kieff' was a symbol. But the scene was marred by the intrusion of glittering brass band instruments in full blast. Blast was certainly the word. The direct limelight produced bad reflections from the metallic parts of the decoration, and the control of the lighting generally was unimaginative. To aid the stage artist a *diminuendo* and *fortissimo* are as necessary in lighting as they are to the conductor of an orchestra. Visual light and colour should subtly complement the light and tone of instrumental and vocal melody. There are few productions where this indescribable but easily recognized mastery is attained.

Picasso designed the *décor* for 'Pulcinella' in Diaghileff's production at the Opera in Paris (1920). His setting for the Neapolitan pantomime echoed the music which Stravinsky had modernized from Pergolesi. At the Lyceum there was new scenery by Chirico, who had previously decorated 'Le Bal' for

Diaghileff; while Fokine's choreography was replaced by Romanov's. Here the Russian tradition vanishes almost entirely. The designs are modern Parisian, the story is Neapolitan, and the choreography derived more from the French ballet than from the Russian Imperial school of pre-War days. Chirico follows Picasso rather than Roerich or Bakst. In fact it is in 'Pulcinella' that we observe the weakening of the breadth of colour so vigorously maintained in Bilbine's 'Boris Godounov' or in 'Rousslan and Ludmila.' Bilinsky has not been blind to suggestions from modern painting, but has skilfully incorporated them with his national style, especially in his setting for 'Naina's Palace,' where his architectural rhythm is expressed with satisfying simplicity.

From 'Pulcinella' to 'Chout' we must cross a continent: from Italy to the province of Perm, whence this legend of 'a buffoon who tricked seven other buffoons' has been directly adapted to music by Prokofieff. Larionoff designed the scenery and costumes for Diaghileff's production at the Prince of Wales's Theatre (1921). The recent revival had a complete change, with designs by Leon Zack and choreography by Romanoff. Prokofieff's peculiar musical idioms have become familiar in Britain, and in 'Chout' might have been expected to produce a modernist conflict with traditional legend; but the whole ballet is welded together by the *décor* and by choreography Slavonic in its every movement.

Zack used the expedient of a stage within a stage. He set up two totemistic pillars, one bearing a fish, the other a bull, and before them two scribes stood silently tracing legends in huge books with great pens. Three steps led up to the inner stage, and the action moved freely up and down as the figures of the Buffoon and his wife were balanced against the others. Owing to an utter rejection of realism verging on full burlesque, ignoring all subtlety for a decorative breadth of appeal, this ballet was peculiarly successful as a work of art. Such modernist mannerisms as may have crept in are no more deliberately eccentric nor personal than the attempts of a peasant craftsman before a full degree of skill has been attained. The rhythms of Prokofieff's music are extended to the full in the rhythms of the dancing, producing a form that must surely be



LEON ZACK *Chout*





I. BILIBINE *Prince Igor*



G. DE CHIRICO *Pulcinella*



comprehensible to at least half the world, even if it should fail to excite the connoisseur in search of startling eccentricity.

The well-known 'Dances Polovtsiennes' from Borodine's 'Prince Igor' were given in Paris (1909) and at Covent Garden (1911) with *décor* by Roerich and choreography by Fokine. This year the entire opera was presented, with new scenery and costumes by Bilibine. Again the *ensemble* was entirely Russian, with the colourful breadth of traditional Slavonic design, avoiding realism and eliminating shaded passages where possible. Chromatic perspective gave the suggestion of depth. The 'Dances Polovtsiennes' were rendered in a magnificent setting, without naturalistic effects: no change of light to mark the passing hours, no landscape to attract the eye, but rather a counter-change of brilliant flat colours against the moving masses of the costumes. All the dramatic features contributed to what may be termed a tribal or group consciousness, in contrast with the individualistic expression of

other works. In a sense it suggested a pagan Bank Holiday—such as at Hampstead, but dominated by a unity that our weary citizens never attain in their escape from office or factory.

Among the most successful Russian ballets have been those in which a theme has been seized upon by a designer and worked out in terms of spatial light and colour and moving figures, in company with an intelligent composer; thus possessing from the first that unity which is so difficult to secure from heterogeneous contributions. Diaghileff saw this; he also had the wisdom to avoid relapsing into a repertory of 'successes.' He realized, as an artist, that every creative artist must advance, uncontent with repetition. If art is repeated, what was once a creation becomes a parlour trick. The tradition of the Russian ballet was never to repeat exactly the same mode. This flexibility in every element is the factor which breathes of life, which vigorously demands the creation of the finest that composer and designer and dancer can bring.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Gustave Doré.* By J. Valmy-Baysse and Louis Dézé. 2 Vols.  $9\frac{3}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$  ins., pp. xii+348 and 172. Illustrated. Editions Marcel Seheur, Paris.

In a spirited and lively biography, by M. J. Valmy-Baysse, followed by a valuable bibliography and catalogue by M. Louis Dézé, an attempt is made to prove that Gustave Doré was one of the greatest, as he was probably the most prolific (not forgetting Daumier's 3,954 lithographs) of French artists in the 19th century. A courageous attempt; for, making every allowance for the unjustified reaction which often succeeds, after a popular painter's death, to the enthusiasm of which he was the object in his lifetime, it would never have occurred to an unprejudiced critic before the perusal of this book to think of Doré at all as one of the outstanding figures in a great period of French art, nor will he be induced by reading it to repent of this forgetfulness. Gifted as he was with boundless energy, unparalleled industry and fervid imagination, Doré never possessed the most

essential qualities of a true artist. His eloquence too easily descended to rhetoric, his pathos to bathos, his tragedy to melodrama. He could never attain, in the esteem of other artists or of serious critics, the position which he easily won in the eyes of a public more easily impressed by sensation, advertisement and reproductions skilfully marketed in huge editions.

The Doré Gallery pictures, the 'Inferno' and the 'Idylls of the King' made his fortune with the British public. This book reveals how vast was his output in addition to these, and with what almost incredible rapidity and fertility in production he established, as a very young man, his reputation in France by lithographs contributed to the comic press, by illustrations to Ariosto, Rabelais and Balzac, 'The Wandering Jew,' 'Don Quixote,' and scores of other publications. 'Le nombre des dessins gravés,' M. Dézé tells us, 'peut être évalué à environ dix mille.' Born in 1832 in Alsace, making his début in Paris in 1848, and dying in 1883, he was essentially



an artist of the Second Empire, and his art shares with much of the architecture and sculpture of that period a certain meretriciousness and love of vulgar display. His fame survived Sedan and reached its climax in the 'seventies; in London, Doré was the idol of the 'eighties. At the end of his life he had considerable success as a sculptor. His landscape painting, I should suppose, was never taken very seriously. He will live by some of his etchings and lithographs and by the best of the illustrations that he designed for wood-engraving. With his prodigious memory and facility in rapid drawing, he was a kind of French Menzel, but he fell short of the Prussian not only in craftsmanship, for he produced nothing comparable to 'Versuche auf Stein mit Pinsel und Schabeisen,' but also in his power of training wood-engravers to reproduce his drawings to perfection. He must fill an important place apart in any chronicle of French art in the 19th century, but cannot be regarded by the historian as one of the links in the chief chain of its development.

CAMPBELL DODGSON

*Modern Architectural Sculpture.* Edited by W. Aumonier. 14 × 11 ins. Illustrated. The Architectural Press Ltd. 1930. 3 gns.

Mr. Aumonier has made a most interesting collection of photographs of architectural sculpture in European countries and the United States of America. He states in the preface that the object of his book is to show the tendencies and developments of the various countries, and although he is himself one of the most skilled of the traditional carvers, he is generous in his praise for the sculptors who are trying to express 'the spirit of the age' in their work. It would have helped us to get a better idea of the value of the sculpture architecturally if more photographs of the buildings had been included.

The Fountain in the Courtyard of the Woodworkers' School, Vienna, and the Entrance of the Festival Theatre, Salzburg, show how enormously the sculptures gain by being shown in their architectural surroundings, while the omission of the photographs of the Underground Building and the British Medical Association Building considerably detracts from the interest of the carvings of Epstein

and the other sculptors who worked thereon. Mr. Aumonier puts Germany at the head of the so-called 'Modernist Movement,' and certainly on the 'decorative' side the work illustrated comes out very strong; the carvings of Hitzberger and the decorative iron panel of Panzer have a quaintness and style which are particularly attractive.

The great Serbian Ivan Mestrovic is well illustrated, and his carvings in wood (reliefs) are specially fine. The Mortuary Chapel at Old Ragusa is more impressive in reality than in the photographs, which scarcely do it justice. The National Memorial for Serbian Heroes which was temporarily erected at Rome before the Great War, would have made a fine example of Mestrovic at his best. The Italian sculptures shown are so bad that it is a matter of regret that they were included at all, and the French work is only redeemed by the panels from the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées by Antoine Bourdelle. In America the work of Lee Lawrie is very fully illustrated from buildings designed by Goodhue, such as the Nebraska State Capitol and St. Thomas's Church, New York, but in spite of great ability and vigour of execution there is a look of hard mechanical perfection about it all that is most unpleasant.

It is a pleasure to turn to the work of Austria, Denmark (where there is an interesting phase of Neo-Classic going strong at the moment) and particularly Sweden, where the world-famous Carl Milles stands out with special brilliance. Milles shows genius particularly as a designer of fountains, and the inventiveness and play of fancy in which he excels are shown in numerous illustrations. Milles has been criticized as an eclectic, but a design such as the *Folke Filbyter Fountain*, Linköping, shows his genius at its best and most natural expression.

The sculpture of Holland, on the other hand, in spite of a desire to get back to the simple form, fails to impress, and is merely uncouth and unpleasant in texture, particularly in the examples on the Post Office, Rotterdam.

In Norway one of the finest recent works is a fountain designed by a lady, showing a bull surrounded by toads, which is unfortunately not illustrated.

Great Britain is represented by a strange mixture of traditional and modernist work



(these terms are used for want of better), and it is a far cry from the skilled fruit-carvings of Aumonier and Broadbent to the simplifications of Kennington and Dobson. The War Memorial at Rickmansworth by Reid Dick is not illustrated, but would have made a fine example of vigorous work on 'traditional' lines.

But it is the work of Eric Gill and Jacob Epstein which has the greatest claim to our sympathies. Eric Gill will always have a special place in our affections as the sculptor who had the courage to discard the bad old habit of modelling in the studio and handing over the execution to trade assistants, and to return to the direct method of carving in stone.

Jacob Epstein is abused and criticized by those who do not understand him, but such sculpture as *Maternity* on the British Medical Association, *Rima* on the Hudson Memorial, and *Night* on the Underground Building are among the finest open air sculptures in England at the present day.

LIONEL PEARSON

*Men and Memories.* Recollections of Sir William Rothenstein, 1872-1900.  $9\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$  ins.; pp. xii + 390, 48 illustrations. Faber and Faber, Ltd. 21s. net.

This title suggests yet a further account of the 'Nineties, of which so much has already been written. But the book is unusual and attractive. The historian who tries to skim through it will find himself becoming immersed in the story, and reading page after page in detail, till he reaches the end without knowing quite how he got there. There is a mass of first-hand material, for the author's experience was wide, and he had no need to work from hearsay. The index alone gives the vast range of his acquaintance. Many of the people referred to are long since dead, for they believed in 'living' and were not the sort to take care of themselves. But, whether because the work is based on notebooks and diaries, or because it is written by a man with an amazing visual memory, the result has an air of reality about it, and it is hard to believe that Conder, Whistler and the rest are not still alive and flourishing. There is none of that obituary feeling which weighs so heavily

on many biographies. When it is possible to recall one's friends with such vividness as this, there is perhaps less cause to be dismal about them. In any case, here they are recalled in a permanent form, for the pleasure of the world in general.

The reproductions of paintings and lithographs explain why the author was welcomed by the great artists of his time. Those of *Legros* and *De Goncourt* are especially notable. But he had other qualities too which confirmed his position: wit and a gift for caricature, coupled with a warm and generous admiration for genius where it really existed. The gift of wit enabled him to hold his own, while the admiration must have encouraged many who still had their names to make, and were fighting their way into celebrity. A caricature of Whistler is reproduced. As an example of critical comment, there is the remark that 'Paint alone is a permanent material: what is fatal to the pictures is the impermanence of many of the painters.'

What strikes one is the moral courage that must have been needed; first, to set out for France at the age of seventeen to become an art student: and then to return to Oxford, and though still quite junior, approach the more celebrated dons or the Heads of Colleges, with a view to producing portraits of them. The same quality appears in the account of Wilde's last days, which is written with dignity, and a sense of the tragedy involved.

The habit of independent judgment leads to some unexpected praise of the older painters, who were not of the author's way of thinking, but had fine qualities of their own. Of Watts, for instance: 'To-day the epic spirit is under a cloud, because it does not now come naturally to modern painters. But to Watts it did come naturally, and the mention of his name evokes a luminous world of his own. This in itself is a proof of his genius.' There is a passage in the same vein on Menzel. The author's own friends are, of course, described very fully: Conder, Wilde, Whistler, Beardsley, Augustus John and Max Beerbohm. Conder refers in a letter to an occurrence which 'did a great deal to shatter that pillar of respectability, myself. If you see a man wandering about Chelsea with an enormous wedding-cake in the shape of a Bombay temple you



## Book Reviews

will know that he is my uncle looking for me, and I hope you will remember to be very kind to him.' From Wilde there used to come 'a stream of entertaining stories, a vivid and genial personal portrait. He was remarkably free from malice.' Whistler was 'obviously a prince among men': but there were also 'limits to the price one should pay for his friendship.'

An enormous assemblage of people moves in these pages. The portraits are always vigorous: are they also accurate? So far as one can tell from first-hand knowledge, they resemble Sir William's own lithographs, where a character is arranged with a fine composition which may or may not please the original, but is acclaimed by the world as a likeness. In this case it is improbable that even the original will feel anything but pleasure at the result, for among recent biographies this stands out as an example of discretion and good taste.

Readers should be warned not to lend this book to their friends; it will not be returned. Nor should parents offer it to their children: otherwise there will be a row of empty beds some morning, and it will be found that the children have gone quietly to Paris, there to become art students, and to follow in Sir William's footsteps.

L.E.

*Moby Dick*. By Herman Melville. Illustrated by Rockwell Kent. Pp. 826 + xxxii,  $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$  ins. Numerous line-blocks. Random House, New York, 1930.

Mr. Rockwell Kent's illustrations from the three-volume limited edition of 'Moby Dick' previously issued have been reprinted in a well-produced book. Melville's English readers will be interested in an American artist's interpretation of the author's masterpiece; grim drawings some of them are, as is fitting for the wonderfully sustained tragedy that they accompany. Mr. Kent knows his subject thoroughly, from its old-world New England background to the Whaler's smallest detail. His decorative use of solid black and varying devices for giving different tones and textures, based mostly on woodcut technique, suit the pages as now set up in Monotype Fournier. Our own illustrators such as Mr. Bawden have employed similar conventions. Black and silver are used without other relief on the cover. The pictures and decorations fulfil the double function of ornament and illustration, the story being carefully followed throughout. It is saying a good deal in an illustrator's favour that his work produces no reactionary flatness after a perusal of the high-pitched devilries of Ahab and the White Whale.

R.S.



ROCKWELL KENT (from 'Moby Dick')







